

**The Prohibited &
The Permitted Foods & Drinks**

HALAL & HARAM



**According To Jewish,
Christian & Muslim
Scriptures**

MUHAMMAD UMAR CHAND

**The Prohibited &
The Permitted Foods & Drinks**

An Indispensable Book For Muslims As Well As Non Muslims

Man has learned to eat some foods and avoid others mainly on two grounds:

Folk Wisdom (practical, empirical experience) and Revelation.

In this book **Muhammad Umar Chand** examines how Adam (AS) and his descendants-from Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, Lut, Moses, Jesus (and his apostles), down to Muhammad (peace be upon them all) received their commandments regarding prohibited and permitted foods and drinks followed them. Standing firm on their convictions, and how others doubted, wavered and disobeyed, innovating their own commandments.

About the Author:

Muhammad Umar Chand a renowned Islamic Scholar, Writer and Researcher is author of numerous books. His writings have appeared in various International magazines and books. He is also the author of "**Fasts As Ordained Before You**".

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— A.S. NOORDEEN —

*In the Name
Of Allah
The Merciful
The Compassionate*

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First Edition 1416/1995
Fifth Edition 1434/2013

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ISBN: 983-065-009-X

Published by

A.S. NOORDEEN

P.O.Box 42 – Gombak,

53800 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: +603-40236003

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e-mail: asnoordeen@yahoo.com

www.asnislamicbooks.com

Printed by

Peretakan Zafar Sdn. Bhd. (Co. No. 97878-H)

Lot 18, Jalan 4/10B, Spring Crest Industrial Park,

Batu Caves, 68100 Kuala Lumpur

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INTRODUCTION

THE SOURCES OF PROHIBITION:

A study of the *Old Testament*, the *New Testament*, and the *Quran* reveals that the concept of prohibition has affected the lives of 'the People of the Book' throughout the centuries. It has been a long journey from the first man's living in the state of innocence in the Garden of Eden down to our modern times as people have sifted through innumerable restrictions and influences of diverse origin, attempting to clarify the issues that touch their prosperity and success [*falaah*] in this world as well as in the hereafter. Today, the followers of most of the religions find themselves restricted regarding consumption of certain foods and drinks. For example some Hindus and Buddhists are vegetarians who would not so much as eat an egg or yoghurt (curds), leave alone meat of any kind. Jews, Christians, and Muslims find themselves divided on the matters of camel, pig, and wine. Muslims living in non-Muslim cultures worry about eating meat of improperly slaughtered animals even if they are otherwise permitted animals. At a higher level, there are many people who would want to make sure that the foods they consume should not only be physically lawful and properly slaughtered, but be acquired by lawful means as well. In this book entitled **The Prohibited and The Permitted Foods and Drinks According To The Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Scriptures**, in three parts, we shall examine how Adam (AS) and his

descendants – from Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Jesus (and his Apostles), down to Muhammad, (peace be upon them all) – received their commandments regarding prohibited and permitted foods and drinks. We will also examine and see how some of the descendants believed in the commandments and followed them, standing firm on their convictions, and how others doubted, wavered, and disobeyed, innovating their own commandments.

Why Are Some Foods Prohibited And Not others

Man has learned to eat some foods and avoid others mainly on two grounds: Folk Wisdom (practical, empirical experience) and Revelation.

Folk Wisdom

The folk wisdom, the human experience of centuries, has taught man to avoid foods which are likely to cause him sickness, disease, or death. This has led us to accepting our physician's recommendations regarding what to eat and what not to eat in modern times. Understandably this is for our own good. This helps us keep a good health and lead a healthy life style. If he tells us salt, sugar, and butter are not good for our health, we have no option but to learn to live without consuming them.

Revelation

The revealed religions, claiming their authority straight from God through Prophets, have instructed their followers what to eat and what not to eat. *The Old Testament* prohibits such foods as they are 'abominable'

to God, and as they are unclean or impure. Jesus Christ, peace be upon him, is reported to have followed the dietary laws of Moses (pbuh). Although none of the four Gospels of *The New Testament* shows Jesus (pbuh) eating anything contrary to the Law of Moses (pbuh), the author of the *Gospel of Mark* alleges that Jesus declared all foods clean. (Mark 7:19). The author of Acts narrates a vision of Peter in which he is told to 'kill and eat' from creatures of any kind. Upon his protest that he had never eaten anything profane or unclean, the person in the vision tells Peter that it was not for him 'to call profane what God counts clean' (Acts 10:1-16). Eventually Paul in his letters works his way out to have a view diagonally opposite to the one presented by the *Old Testament*. The *Quran*, proclaiming itself to be *Muhaiman*, the Discriminating Judge, shows us how people interpolated and distorted the message of God, proclaiming to be *Haram* what had been declared by the Lawgiver to be *Halal* and proclaiming to be *Halal* what the Lawgiver had declared to be *Haram*. *Quran* tells us why certain things have been declared prohibited – because they are *najas* (impure, unclean, contaminated), *rijs* (dirty, filthy), *khabeeth* (bad, repugnant, harmful), and *haraam* (unlawful or prohibited). *The Quran* also tells us why certain things have been permitted – because they are *Tayyeb* pure and *Zakki* clean.

Not Everything That God has Created Is Clean For All Creatures

One can argue that God should have no personal reason to hate and abhor some animals as sources of food after He has created them, neither should He be sentimental about what His creatures eat. Why does God get upset

if somebody eats pork or drinks wine? The Muslim response to this line of argument is simple:

1. Allah is Ghani, Self Sufficient. He doesn't get upset or hurt if anybody acts contrary to His commandments.

If you are ungrateful rejecters, then Allah is *Ghani* (He does not need your faith in Him), but He is not pleased over His bondsmen's ingratitude; but if you are grateful, He is pleased with you. No bearer of burden can bear a burden of another... (*Az-zumur* 39:7).

2. Allah (SWT) wants His believers to be clean and healthy, eating clean and healthy food [*tayyebaat*].

O you who believe, eat of the good things [*Tayyebaat*] that We have provided for you, and be thankful to Allah if it is He alone whom you worship.

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:172).

3. Allah (SWT) wants the believers to approach Him in a state of cleanliness (when praying). He has taught them (through His prophets) what foods would be clean and wholesome for them to eat:

They ask you what has been *Uhillah* for them, (declared Halal, Permitted, lawful).

Say: *Uhillah Lakum-ut Tayyebaat*, Lawful to

you are all things good, pure, and clean,
Tayyebaat.

(*Al-Maedah* 5:4)

Of course, it is true that all things are created by Allah (SWT). But we can not eat everything only because it has been created by Allah (SWT). As a matter of fact, everything that He has created is food for something else that He has created. Everything that He has created may be pure, clean, and wholesome for some creatures in this world, but impure, unclean, and unwholesome for other creatures. All creatures have different concepts of cleanliness, and different diet requirements. For example, man considers himself the cleanest of all creatures, but he is not clean enough for another civilized human being to eat. On the other hand, he is clean enough for the maggots, wild animals, and the cannibals among human beings to eat – a savoury food for dogs, vultures, wolves, crocodiles, and other animals only if they can get hold of him. On the other hand, flies, maggots, and worms are not clean enough from our perspective, but they are clean enough for lizards, birds, and fish. Thus everything God has created may be 'clean' because it has been created by God, but not clean enough for human beings to eat.

Besides, there are a lot of things that are wholesome food for some creatures, but harmful to other creatures, including human beings. That is why Allah (SWT) has taught us to seek His protection against the evil of what He has created:

Say: I seek protection with the Lord of the
Dawn From the evil of the things He has
created...

(*Al-Falaq* 114:2)

Who Benefits From What People Eat Or Do Not Eat?

The prohibitive advice by the dietician is never meant to be for the benefit of the physician himself, but for the benefit of the consultant or the sick. Similarly, the prohibition on religious grounds is not meant to benefit God, His Angels, or His Prophets, but the man, the follower himself. It is for the sake of man's own benefit that he is asked to consume some foods and not others. Apparently, religious commandments disapprove of certain foods and drinks on the basis of their being impure or unclean. 'Prophets of God' claim to receive such knowledge directly from God. Some scriptures put the idea of prohibition in words that would suggest God's personal 'abhorrence' of those foods, calling them an 'abomination'.

Through His chosen people (be they doctors and physicians or Prophets and Messengers), God makes sure to keep us informed regarding what is good for us to eat and what is not. We give up salt and sugar on the advice of our physicians in modern times, and we give up pork, wine on the instructions of the Prophets (peace be upon them all.) Furthermore, eating habits of people reflect upon their mental and spiritual standing. They say, "Man is known by the food he eats." People given to eating 'clean' foods try to behave like clean people in all respects. Whereas people given to eating 'abominable' foods, naturally enough, behave abominably.

A Child Eating Against Parents' Advice

Parents instruct their children against eating unwhole-

some, unclear, poisonous, or toxic things. Let us take an example of a child who insists on eating something that is bad for his health. He does this in gross disobedience of his parents' instructions. Now it would not be the parents, but the child himself, who would suffer the consequences of what he eats. He would have to suffer from bad health, sickness, or even death. That, in a way, is the child's punishment for disobeying the instructions of those who know better. Parents are not happy to see their children punished in this way. However, the child gets what he goes for, or, as the less compassionate would say, he gets what he deserves.

A Believer Eating Against God's Commandments

The same principle goes for the foods prohibited by God through His Prophets. People learnt to give up eating certain kinds of foods in older times on the specific advice of God's Prophets and Messengers. It is not God (Glorified is He) who will get poisoned if people eat toxic, unclear, or unwholesome food. The perceived punishment as the outcome of the act of disobedience is not because God is belittled when His servants eat the prohibited food, nor because He delights in punishing His creatures. It is the natural result or consequence of the act performed – spiritually as well as physically. Man's act of disobedience does not affect God in any way as He says:

As for him who disbelieves, (let him know that) Io, Allah is *Ghani* (Independent, Self-Sufficient) of all the worlds

(*Aal-'Imraan* 3:97).

PART 1

THE PROHIBITIONS ACCORDING TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. THE FIRST PROHIBITION IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

AS the story in the *Book of Genesis* goes, Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden asking him 'to till it and keep it.' Man was told to freely eat of every tree of the garden, 'but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,' he was told, not to eat. The consequences of disobedience, he was told, would be severe.

For in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'

(*Genesis* 2:15-17.)

In ancient languages words for death, die, and kill did not only mean physical death. Obviously, the expressions 'the tree of knowledge of good and evil' and the consequences of 'death' are used metaphorically, not literally. What is expressed by the Old Testament in terms of 'lest you die' is rendered by the Quran as 'lest you become wrong-doers.'

And We said: O Adam, dwell you and your spouse in the Garden, and eat you twain plenteously of it as you wish, but do not approach that yonder tree, lest you twain become of the wrong-doers.

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:35)

Wrong-doing is a form of disobedience and rebellion. In a way, when a man commits a wrong-doing he dies to the faith that has been bestowed upon him by God. The wrong-doer is, in terms of faith, as good as dead. Had he possessed a grain of faith, he wouldn't have been disobedient. In another context in the *Quran*, Adam (AS)'s anticipated situation of disobedience is described as [*fan-tashqaa*] 'lest you be distressed or miserable.' (*Taha* 20:117)

After having eaten the fruit of the prohibited tree, Adam (AS) did not 'die' in any literal sense of the word. He lived and procreated (as he was expected to do.) Only he was sent down away from the 'Garden of Eden'. In a way it was 'death' of the states of innocence and obedience Adam (AS) had been placed in. Eating of the forbidden fruit was thus the birth of insubordination, disobedience, and rebellion. However, this act of disobedience was a necessity in order to fulfil God's original plan of placing on the earth a viceregent. God had, according to the *Quran*, disclosed this plan to His angels long before the creation of Adam (AS):

And remember when your Lord said to the angels: Lo, I am about to place a vicegerent [*khaleefah*] on the earth....

(*Al-Baqarah* 2: 30)

Quran tells us that so long as Adam (AS) was in Jannah, he felt neither hunger nor thirst, nor did he suffer from the climatic variations.

Indeed it is here that you shall neither hunger in it, nor go naked in it. Neither shall you thirst in it, nor suffer variations of the sun (heat, climate).

(*Taha* 20: 118-119)

According to both the *Book of Genesis* and the *Quran*, God told Adam (AS), he could have anything from the Garden for his food except one tree:

"I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food."

(*Genesis* 1:29)

The *Quran* mentions similar permission for Adam (AS) to eat as he wished:

And We said: O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the garden and eat you freely from wherever you desire; but come not near this tree lest you become wrongdoers [*fa-takoona minad-dhhaalimeen.*]

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:35)

The exceptional prohibition was made of that one tree that has not been specifically named either in the *Old Testament* or the *Quran*. We don't know if it was an apple tree as the Jewish and Christian tradition tells

us, or wheat as other traditions tell us. Apple is not mentioned in the *Old Testament* until the singer in the Solomon's days sings about it in *The Song Of Songs* comparing the beauty of the beloved with it:

As apple tree among the trees of the wood,
so is my beloved among young men ...
sustain me with raisins, refresh me with
apples.. (2:3,5)... Oh may your breasts be
like the clusters of the vine, and the scent
of your breath like apples (7:8).. under the
apple tree I awakened you.. (8:5)

The tree was neither of apple nor of wheat. It was 'the tree of knowledge' (as the serpent calls it in the *Book of Genesis*, or 'the tree of eternity' as the Satan calls it in the *Quran*.) According to the *Quran*, it was Satan who called that mysterious tree 'the tree of eternity and a dominion that does not age' [*shajratul khuld wa mulkin laa yablaa.*] (*Taba* 20:120).

Adam (AS), being the first man that we know of, was told to 'be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it' (*Genesis* 1:28). According to *Quran* Allah chose Adam (AS) (*Aal-'Imraan* 3:33), he was a Prophet and One Spoken to by God ([*Qaal Ya Adamu, anbiyahum bi-asmaihim*] (*Al-Baqarah* 2:33). *Quran* emphasises Divine role in man's progress on the earth. This concept implies not only tacit acquiescence of nature towards man's well-being, but a deliberate will and intention of the Creator of the Universe promising help for man in his undertakings. Nature's subjugation is meant to be for the benefit of man, not for his destruction:

He (Allah) it is Who has created for you
All that is in the earth.
(*Al-Baqarah* 2:29)

Do you not see that Allah has subjected
(subdued) for you whatever is in the heav-
ens and whatever is in the earth, and has
completed His favours upon you - outwardly
and inwardly.

(*Luqmaan* 31:20.)

In the *Book of Genesis* (1:28), man is explicitly told to 'have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

One obvious meaning of 'having dominion' over these creatures would be man's domesticating them or using them without being afraid of them. Man would not be asked to have dominion over 'fish and birds and every living thing that moves' unless he was allowed to use them for his benefit. Some of the uses man was to find for these animals were to employ them as beasts of burden, as protectors against other animals, or as watch-dogs. Man also learned to consume their milk and eat their flesh as food, and he learned to use their hides as garments.

So long as they lived in the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, peace be upon them both) as well as all other animals were 'plant eaters, vegetarians, herbivorous':

And to every beast of the earth,
and to every bird of the air,

everything that has the breath of life,
I have given every green plant for food.'

(*Genesis* 1:30)

Get You Down [*ihbitu*]! The Fall

This was the ideal world of the Garden of Eden, Paradise, Jannah, Gennette, the state of innocence, where no animal, big or small, threatened to eat any other. Everything was going on just fine until Adam and Eve, peace be upon them both, tasted the fruit of the forbidden tree. It is an interesting story that tells us how serpent beguiled the woman, and how she in turn beguiled the man.

But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves and made themselves aprons.

(*Genesis* 3:4-7)

There follows the first drama of mankind with God Himself. As Adam and Eve, peace be upon them both, are trying to find a way of hiding themselves from their

nakedness, Lord God makes His unexpected Entry. (He is out to take a walk.) As they heard the sound of Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, Adam and Eve, peace be upon them both, hid themselves. Lord God called to them, "Where are you?" Adam excused himself saying he was afraid of approaching God because he was naked. How did Adam (AS) know he was naked? (They had been in that state for ever right from the beginning of their days in the Garden of Eden.) But eating of the prohibited fruit had opened their eyes, making them aware of their nakedness. Now, according to the *Old Testament* version of the story, Adam (AS) blamed Eve (AS) for beguiling him into eating the fruit. And Eve (poor thing!), in her turn, threw the blame on the serpent. And Lord God (as if not knowing whom to hold responsible) ended up cursing all the three parties:

- The serpent was cursed to go upon its belly and eat dust;
- Eve was cursed into bearing children with pain, and
- Adam was cursed into eating his bread with toil.

(*Genesis* 3:8-19)

Who Presided Over The Meetings With Satan?

If man is the master of the household, he should be the one negotiating good or evil transactions with the outside world. It would be difficult to see how a serpent can negotiate fruit-eating with Eve without the explicit knowledge of Adam (AS) who is supposed to be the master of his house. When the time comes for facing the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit, Adam (AS) blames the poor woman. (That's exactly what happens in the real world!) According to this story, it

seems, Adam (AS) had yet to learn to be a gentleman. He threw the responsibility on his wife's shoulders. This narration has traces of man's sexist interpretation of the story where the woman is always to be held responsible for whatever goes wrong in the household and the man is the one who gets credit for anything that goes right!

Who was the First to Eat of the Forbidden Fruit? The Quranic Interpretation:

There is a subtle difference in the Quranic version of the same story as we compare it with the story in *The Book Of Genesis*. The first difference we notice is the absence of the 'serpent' in the Quranic story. The Serpent may have been a symbolic expression of sexuality if not a character from fables and folklores of the primitive cultures. In the *Quran*, it is 'Iblees' or 'Satan' who is the perpetrator of the deceptive temptation. The second and more subtle difference is that rather than approaching Eve and carrying on the secret negotiations with her, the Satan comes to Adam (AS) himself to tell him about the benefits of the forbidden tree. It would not be fair for Adam (AS) now to hold his woman responsible for the evil that he himself brought to his own household!

Then did Satan whisper [*waswasa*] to him
(that is, Adam), and said, "O Adam, shall
I direct you to a tree of eternity and a
dominion that ages not!"

(*Taha* 20:120.)

Perhaps before Adam and Eve, peace be upon them

both, eventually succumbed to the temptation of following the instructions of the Satan, the latter had a number of encounters with the two of them, sometimes with him alone, and at other times with both of them together.

Then the Satan whispered to the two of them [*fa-waswasa-la huma*] so that he might discover to the two of them [*liyubdi' huma*] what lay hidden from the two of them of their shame (nakedness), [*saw'atibina*] and he said: "The Lord of the two of you has not forbidden the two of you that tree but (for the reason that or lest) the two of you might become angels [*malakain*] or become of the immortals [*khulideen*]." And he swore to the two of them (saying): "I am of your well-wishers [*wa qaasama-huma inni lakuma min-naasibeen*]."

(*Al-A'raaf* 7: 20-21)

It was as a result of such meetings or parleys with Adam (AS) at first and then the two of them together that the Satan succeeded in luring them into eating the fruit of that forbidden tree. Needless to say, according to the *Quran*, it was not Eve who ate of it first, giving it to her husband later on, as described by the interpolators of the *Book Of Genesis*. According to the *Quran*, once the two ate the fruit together at the same time, they got aware of their nakedness. The feeling or excitement that follows the awareness (knowing one another) is mutual. As Allah (SWT) says about the woman of Aziz of Misr (Zulekha or Geliho) and Yusuf (pbuh):

‘And assuredly she besought him and he besought her [*wa laqad hammat bihee wa hamma bihaa*],’

(*Surah Yusuf* 12:23):

‘So the two of them ate of that tree,’ [*fa-akala minhaa*] says *Quran* (Taha 20:121).

In this way with subtlety (or deceit [*bi-ghuroorin*]) he (Satan or Iblees) caused the two of them to fall (give in, incline, or win over in argument [*fa-dallabuma*]). Then when the two of them tasted of the tree, their shame or nakedness was revealed to them [*badat labuma saw-aatubuma*], and they began to cover themselves with leaves from the Garden [*waraqil-jannah*]. And their Lord said to them, “Did I not forbid you that tree, and did I not tell you that Satan was to you an obvious enemy.”

(*Al-A’raaf* 7:20-22)

Quran Exonerates Eve (AS)

Being the chief in the household, Adam (AS) was the one who had been warned against Satan’s lures. Of course, if anything went wrong, the responsibility would be entirely his, not hers:

Then We (i.e. Allah (SWT)) said, “O Adam, indeed this is an enemy to you and to your spouse, so let him not drive forth the two of you out of Jannah, lest you be distressed..

(*Taha* 20:117)

When Satan succeeded in luring both of them, he was the one to be blamed, not his spouse. As the fall was mainly Adam (AS)’s, not Eve (AS)’s, he is the one blamed by God on four counts:

1. Adam (AS), not Eve (AS), is the one blamed for forgetting God’s command: “And assuredly We covenanted with Adam earlier, then he forgot [*fa-nasiya*] (the covenant) (Taha 20:115).”

2. Adam (AS), not Eve (AS), is the one blamed for his lack of determination: “And We did not find in him (i.e. Adam) steadfastness (or determination) [*wa-lam najid labu ‘azmaa*] (Taha 20:115).”

3. Adam (AS), not Eve (AS), is the one blamed for his disobedience: “And Adam disobeyed his Lord [*wa ‘aSaa Adamu Rabhu*] (Taha 20:121), and

4. Adam (AS), not Eve (AS), is the one blamed for the transgression, error, or going astray [*fa-ghawa*] (Taha 20:121):

Quran Exonerates Adam (AS) As Well! Adam’s Weaknesses are not to be held against him for ever!

Rashheeduddin Al-Maibudawi (520 AH) points out that Allah puts the blame of Adam (AS)’s troubles on the Satan exonerating Adam (AS) when He says, Satan whispered [*waswasa*] to Adam (AS). Going one step further, Allah (SWT) takes the responsibility of Adam’s weakness on Himself for having created him weak. Finally, Allah (SWT) puts Adam (AS) through

the ordeal of repentance and forgives him. So the case of Adam (AS)'s weakness or sin is closed for ever so far as God is concerned. It will be millions of years later on in the first century AD that some clever people would hold themselves responsible for what Adam (AS) had done millions of years ago and hold Adam (AS) responsible for what they would be doing millions of years after him – considering themselves to have been born in sin, under the spell of what they coined to be 'the Original Sin.' In order to clear this fog on human intelligence, Allah (SWT) shows how He had forgiven Adam (AS).

Then learned Adam from his Lord certain words and his Lord relented towards him: for He is oft-Relenting, Most Merciful.

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:37)

Of course, the One (Allah SWT) who had taught Adam about the problem (prohibition) guided him to the solution as well. The solution was to ask for forgiveness. Allah (SWT) taught Adam (AS) certain words in which he could seek God's forgiveness.

Adam and Eve (peace be upon them both), as they appear in the Quran, instead of wasting their time and energies on blaming one another, took the responsibility of their weakness upon themselves, and went on to ask for forgiveness in these words taught to them by Allah (SWT):

**[Qaalaa Rabbanaa Dhalamna anfusanaa;
wa illam taghfirlanaa wa tarhamnaa
la-nakoonnal minal khaasireen.]**

(*Al-A'raaf* 7:23)

The two of them (would) say: "O the Lord of us twain, We two have wronged our souls. If you do not forgive us and do not bestow upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be the losers."

(*Al-A'araf* 7:23)

As a consequence of this prayer, Allah (SWT) relented towards both Adam and Eve (peace be upon them both):

After that his Lord accepted him (i.e. his prayer) and relented towards him, and guided him [*thum ma-jtabaahu rabbuhu, fa-taaba 'alaihi wa hadaa*]

(*Taba* 20:122)

If Allah (SWT) punished Adam's progeny for Adam (AS)'s sins, He would be an unjust God and it would not be right for Him to call Himself *Tawwab* and *Rahim*. Thus there is no concept of 'Original Sin' in Quran.

A Criterion of Behaviour: The New Covenant With Adam (AS)

Instead of holding the generations of Adam (pbuh) responsible for what the first man did or what he was made to do, the *Quran* sets up a criterion of behaviour against which each and every individual shall be judged without anybody taking anybody else's burdens [*wa la taziru vaaziratin vizra ukbraa*] (*Al-An'aam* 6:164):

We said, "Get you down all from here. Then

when there comes to you Guidance from Me, then whoever follows my Guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. But those who reject Faith and belie our Signs, they shall be the people of fire and there shall they abide for ever.

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:38-39)

It was not good for Adam (As) to be impatient and hasty, but Allah (SWT) took the responsibility of his fault on Himself (as He was the Creator). He said, "Man was created with (the quality of) haste (in him)" [*khuliqal insaana min 'ajal.*] (*Al-Anbiyaa* 21:37.) Moreover, Allah (SWT) knows He has created man weak, so He is willing to forgive.

[*Wallahu yureed ain yatooba 'alaikum...
Tureedullah ain Yukhafifa 'ankum;
wa khuliqal insaanu dhaeefa.*

(*An-Nisaa* 4:27, 28)

And Allah intends to relent towards you... and Allah intends to lighten (your burdens), and (i.e. because) man has been created weak (*An-Nisaa* 4:27, 28)

All a man has to do is to ask for forgiveness wholeheartedly.

Stations of Iblees & Adam

Muslim scholars and Sufis say that both Iblees Rajcem and Adam (AS) disobeyed God and both had to suffer the consequences – the Fall. Both of them received the

command of [*ibbata*] (get you down). But Iblees was told 'Then get you out of here; for you are rejected (cursed).' *Akbruj minhaa fa-innaka rajcem (Al-Hijr* 15:44) He said, "It is not for you to be arrogant here. So get you out of here. You are to be the meanest of the creatures." (*Al-A'araaf* 7:13). One was Shaqee, the other Sa'eed. (*Hood* 11:105)

Muslim scholars say the fall of Adam was due to his desire, urge or craving [*Shahwah*], which was due to his human weakness. But the fall of Iblees was due to his pride [*kibr*]. Al-Maibudawi (520 A.H.) says: Iblees was found blameworthy on five counts and was thus cursed and evicted from Jannah. Adam, on the contrary, outgrew his weaknesses rising far above the station of Iblees for behaving exactly opposite to the way Iblees behaved. Thus Adam (pbuh) gained for himself Mercy and Blessings of Allah, the light of guidance, and forgiveness whereas Iblees earned for himself rejection and expulsion.¹

	Iblees	Adam
1	Lam Yaqirra bidh-dhanbi= He didn't confess to his sin. His pride did not allow him to accept his fault.	Adam, due to his humility, returned to God, confessed to his sin, and promised not to persist on it
2	Lam yandam 'alaihi	Adam regreted about

(Adapted from Rasheedudeen Al-Maibudawi (520 AH): *Kashaful Israr Wa Uddatul Abraar*, Tehran, Moesasah Intesharaat Amir Kabir, Tehran, Vol.3, page 573, 589)

= He did not repent on it. He had no regrets and no wish to be excused.	what had happened. He repented and was willing to expiate for it.
3 lam yalim nafsahu: He did not blame himself for what he had done to himself, and did not suffer himself for it.	Adam turned to himself and blamed himself for what had happened, and accused himself for his downfall.
4 lam yaraa-at- Taw-bat 'ala Nafsihi Wajiba= He did not see (consider) repentance obligatory on himself. He did not wish to be excused and showed no humility.	Adam knew repentance to be the key to the blessings of Allah and a way of getting forgiveness. He hastened to repent and did not stop praying until he received forgiveness.
5 Qanat min Rah-matillah: He despaired of Allah's Mercy, not knowing that putting people into despair was a quality of the lowly; and Allah is not lowly. If there's no despair with Him, there is no safety from Him either because safety can be only from the weak,	Adam did not lose his hope. He did not despair. He put his heart into the Mercy and Forgiveness of Allah (SWT). He (and his spouse) went on crying to Allah the Ghani for His Mercy and Forgiveness until he received both of them: Qaalaa Rabbana Dhalamna anfusanaa; wa illam taghfirlanaa wa tar-

and Allah is not weak. When Iblees lost his hope, the unfortunate one, stayed away from repenting.	hamnaa lanakoonnan minal khaasireen. (7:23)
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Three Behavioural Patterns For Mankind To Choose From:

We have on this earth basically three different models or patterns of behaviour for us to choose from. On the two extremities of good and evil we have the two behaviours of the Determined Prophets and the Iblees. Somewhere in the middle, we have the path of Adam who erred but hastened to repent. Which one of the three behavioural patterns we wish to choose depends upon us.

On one extremity is this group of the **Determined Prophets** [*ooolul 'azm min-ar-rusul*] (*Al-Abqaaf* 46:35). They are the first and the foremost among mankind, commended by Allah (SWT) without any reservations. Their situation emerges as opposite of the two bad cases of Adam and Iblees. The Determined Prophets excelled where Adam and Iblees failed. They had 'azm that Adam lacked and Iblees exalted himself in and they possessed **patience** and **humility** that Satan lacked and Adam excelled in. Prophets Noah, Abraham, Moosa (Moses), 'Isa (Jesus), and Muhammad (peace be upon them all) were Prophets of greater Determination. They are the best of mankind. We cannot aspire to be like them. We can only wish to be somewhere among

the least of their companions or followers – that would be a great honour for us. Among the Ummah of Muhammad (SAW), such people would be *Asabiyyoon*, as described in *Al-Waaqi'ah* 56:10-26).

- On the other extremity, we have the situation of **Iblees** who was full of determination which led him to pride. This pride of his forced him to stay away from the blessings of Allah and His Forgiveness. His determination thus took him to such heights of pride that he found it difficult to repent. He claimed to be better than Adam. What was supposed to have been his strength thus turned out to be a source of loss for him. Little did it profit him. The people who follow his example will be on the wrong extremity where they are condemned outright. If we decide to follow them, we would be arrogant and proud, self-righteous, unrepenting, unforgiving and unforgiven, to be shunned and cursed and rejected by all friends and foes – just like Iblees himself. (Such people are the *Asahabush-Shimaal* or *Asahabul Mash'amah* as described in Surah *Al-Waaqi'ah* 56:9, 41-56)

- The situation of **Adam** (AS) is that he was found lacking in determination ('azm) of staying on the Covenant. However, for the very same reason that he was weak he was not found determined to persist on his sin. In a way, his weakness proved to be a blessing for him as it helped him to repent, and, eventually, it profited him. Adam (AS)'s path is the middle path where we would be in a situation full of human weaknesses ready to receive divine blessings. Staying in this station means that we would

always be willing to repent and stay within the limits of behaviour acceptable to Allah (SWT). Again, within the behavioural patterns of Adam (AS), we have a variety of stations of life – the stations of obedience and disobedience, the stations of independence, curiosity, and exploration, the station of forgetting commandments, and the stations of confession, repentance, and sorrow. We are free to choose whichever state of Adam (AS)'s life we wish to follow. We shall be rewarded or punished, in this world or in the hereafter, according to the choice we make. Whatever we choose, under no circumstances should we forget the fact that Allah (SWT) has prescribed or Written Mercy for Himself and that He has promised to forgive us if we seek His forgiveness. Among the Ummah of Muhammad (SAW), *Asahabul Maimanah* or *Asahabul Yameen* will be among such people, as described in Surah *Al-Waaqi'ah* 56:8, 27-40)

Five Beautiful Names of Adam (AS) According to His Five Stations:

Allah (SWT) calls Adam by five beautiful names according to his various spiritual positions. He was called **Adam**, **Khaleefah**, **Insaan**, **Bashar**, and the **Chosen one**. Created from dust, Adeem, he was intended to be Khalifah, viceregent. Being tempted by Satan, he forgot [Insiya] and broke the covenant. Because of his persistence in repentance, soon Adam (AS) received the good news [basharah] of forgiveness. Once forgiven by Allah (SWT), Adam (AS) was restored to his position of Viceregent (Khaleefah), and Allah (SWT) said, "Allah Chose Adam, and Noah, and the House of Ibraheem,

and the House of 'Imraan.' (*Aal-'Imraan* 3:33)
We shall elaborate this point further:

1. First of all, he (AS) was called Adam because he was created from 'Adeem-ul-ardh,' the surface of the earth, that is 'dust'. [*wa laqad khalaqnal insaana min Sulalatin min Teen*] (*Al-Moeminoon* 23:12) and was raised to be the best of the mould of creation [*laqad khalaqnal insaana feei ahsani-t taqweem*] (*At-Teen* 95:4). As Al-Maibudawi says, the distinction was not in the dust [*Turbab*] but in the upbringing, instruction, education [*Tarbiyah*]. Upbringing of Adam (AS) was the way Allah (SWT) brought Adam (AS) up and made him a prophet for angels and his progeny.

2. He was chosen to be the *Khaleefah* (viceregent) of God replacing the work of angels (*Al-Baqarah* 2:30). Besides *Tasbeeh* and *Tableel*, he took upon himself the trust, the moral responsibility for peace and justice on this earth.

Indeed We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and shrank from it, and man bore it. Indeed he was very iniquitous and very ignorant.

(*Al-Ahzab* 33:72)

3. Then he was called Insaan because he forgot his covenant [*fa nasiya*] because of which he had to go through a great deal of ordeal.

4. He was called *Bashar* because he was the one who

was involved in pursuing his affairs of moral responsibilities and repentance. [*sammahu Basharu li-mubaasharatubul umoor*]. So he got the glad tidings [*Bashaarah*] of forgiveness and mercy from Allah (SWT).

Eventually, Adam (AS) was restored to his formal position to be the *Khaleefah* (the viceregent of God) on the earth as he had already been chosen by Allah (SWT) who says:

Indeed Allah chose [*asTafaa*] Adam and Noah and the House of Ibrahim and the House of 'Imraan (which includes both Moses & Jesus) over the worlds..
(*Aal-'Imraan* 3:33)

Adam's Fall was a Part Of ALLAH'S Over-all Design

According to the Islamic tradition, Adam (AS)'s fall from the state of innocence could have happened only because it had already been destined or designed by God. It is obvious that Adam and Eve (peace be upon them both) were made aware of their nakedness as a result of eating the forbidden fruit. Through life and death of Adam and his progeny, Allah (SWT) wanted to find out who would be the best in doing good deeds (*Al-Mulk* 67:2). This helped them come to know their roles as *Khaleefahs* on this earth (2:30) and their roles as breeders of human species (*Al-A'araaf* 7:172). When they came to know what their sexual roles were, Adam and Eve, peace be upon them both, tried to hide their nakedness with the 'leaves of the garden'. (*Al-A'araaf*

7:21; *Taha* 20:121.)

Situations When the Lawful Is Forbidden and When the Forbidden Is Lawful:

It is possible that the episode of eating the forbidden fruit before Allah makes it lawful is not an event that happened only once in the history of human civilization. It is possible for every one of us human beings to be in situations when even 'lawful' is 'forbidden' to us. This happens to millions of people when they are fasting. They are forbidden to eat and drink even the permitted foods and drinks. Fasting persons are not allowed to indulge in any sexual pursuits even with their own lawful spouses. Similarly, a hunter is not permitted to hunt even a lawful animal when he is in the state of Ihraam for Hadj or Umrah. We are strictly required to avoid getting involved in such situations, although they are permitted in normal circumstances. Such a prohibition is all the more stringent in situations in which prohibition has already been clearly declared: eating and drinking the prohibited foods and drinks and having sexual relationship which has not been sanctified would be enormities in the eyes of the Law. There is always a danger for us the descendants of the first Adam (AS) of being expelled from the Jannah (which is achieved in this world and in the Hereafter through Allah's pleasure).

On the other hand, there are moments in every Adam and Eve's life when 'forbidden' becomes 'lawful.' For example, a sexual relationship when it is sanctified by religion or society.

A Warning For Adam's sons:

We are specifically warned against the danger of allowing the Satan to uncover our nakedness for others to see:

O you children of Adam, we have sent down (revealed the knowledge of) apparel in order to cover the nakedness of your body as well as to be an adornment to you. And (know that) the apparel of piety (God-consciousness [taqwah]) is the best (apparel). These are some of the signs of Allah – so that they may receive admonition.

O you children of Adam, let not Satan seduce you to be expelled from Jannah as he seduced your (great grand) parents (Adam and Eve) to be expelled from Jannah, removing from them their apparel (of Jannah) so as to reveal to them their nakedness.

(*Al-A'raaf* 7: 26-27)

Clothing in Jannah

Once Adam (AS) was out of the garden of Eden, he was left to sort out things on his own: conditions of the covenant having radically changed. Left to cover himself without the 'leaves of the garden,' man, Adam (AS), resorted to using animal skins for his garments, of course, 'with God's permission,' as Muslims would say.

And the Lord made for Adam and for his spouse garments of skins and clothed them.
(*Genesis* 3:21.)

The verb 'clothed' shows human limitation on linguistic precision. The writers of any generation have to be slaves of their own cultural backgrounds as they are obliged to make use of expressions prevalent in their times and climes. Here the term 'clothed' has been used retrospectively. It is an expression used for the past from an activity that is to come into vogue in a future age when man would learn to make clothes.

Animal Skins For Adam (AS) To wear

One may wonder here how Adam (AS) would get animal skins if he did not kill animals. Besides, once he took so much trouble of killing these animals, would he do it only to obtain skins to cover his nakedness, throwing away the real thing, the meat. How long would he resist the temptation of eating the flesh?

However that may have been, we know that Adam (AS) soon learned to discriminate between 'cattle' and 'beasts' (*Genesis*: 2:19-20). This suggests domestication of some animals for skins, milk and flesh, letting others stay as wild as they are even today.

2. CAIN & ABEL: WHY SOME OFFERS WERE ACCEPTED & OTHERS REJECTED?

God taught man to share with his fellow human beings what he owned. Man learned to do this for the sake of God, for God's pleasure. Offerings to God were meant to meet this requirement. If a man owned a crop of vegetables, he would offer the best of his vegetables for the sake of God. If he owned a herd of animals,

he was taught to offer the best of his animals for the sake of God.

In the *Book of Genesis* (Chapter 4), we find Abel bringing 'the firstling of his flock and their fat portions' for an offering as he was a keeper of sheep. We also find Cain bringing 'fruit of the ground' for offering as he was a tiller, a farmer. (*Genesis* 4:1-4.) Abel was a shepherd, but Cain a farmer. Later on, we find Jacob (AS) to be a shepherd and a farmer, but Jesu (AS), his rival brother to be a hunter.

Quran does not specify the nature of the offerings of the two. It only emphasises the fact that the offering was accepted from one, and not from the other. The reason for such discriminatory acceptance is clearly mentioned: presence or lack of piety.

And recite to them with truth the tale of the two sons of Adam. (Tell them how) they offered each a sacrifice, and how it was accepted from the one of them and how it was not accepted from the other. (The one) said: 'I will surely kill you.' The other said, 'Allah accepts only from those who are *muttaqeen*' (God-fearing, pious, those who ward off evil.)

(*Al-Maidah* 5:27)

The one sacrifice that was approved was because of the offerer's *Tagwa*, piety, or God-consciousness. Abel (Habeel) brought the best of what he had. He did this to please Allah (God) for having provided him with what he had. The other, Cain (Qabeel), perhaps lacking

in *Taqwa*, brought the worst of what he had, not willing to part with what he thought was his own. *The Book of Genesis* emphasises 'doing well' as against 'not doing well'.

The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?"

And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door. Its desire is for you. But you must master (overcome) it."

(*Genesis* 4:6-8)

However, the primitive man would readily distort the import or purpose of the Divine command thinking he was being asked to make an offering because God was hungry and wanted to eat! (Glorified is He of what they ascribe to Him.) Man thought what was good for him as food must be good for God as well to eat. Man must have relished eating animal flesh before he found himself offering it to God. Whatever the intent of the Message the Prophets received, the copyists and scribes of the scriptures tended to make the deity look like an anthropomorphic god. God was depicted to have human habits and desires. He is shown delighting in savoury smells of foods humans are known to delight in. Between Leviticus 1:9 and Numbers 29:30, there are 31 references assuring us that 'the smell of this food offering is pleasing to the Lord.' It was easy for man to forget that

"Allah (is) the Originator of the Heavens and the Earth, Who feeds, and is not fed.

[*Wa huwa yut-'imnu wa-laa yut-'amu*]"

(*Al-An'aam* 6:14)

When Muslims find people ascribing human qualities to God, they are taught to say:

Glorified be the God of heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne, From that which they ascribe to Him.

(*Quran: Zukhruf* 43:82)

If the message tells us to burn an animal and leave it for God to consume it, we know that there is something wrong with the basic message which contradicts what Allah (SWT) says about Himself: 'He feeds and is not fed.' Obviously, something has been added to the original message, something has been taken away from it, or something has been distorted. Naturally, the message as we see it has not emanated from God. It is because God does not eat, and the smell of a wasted animal would hardly be sweet to anyone. Quran corrects all such primitive notions for us telling us how God approves of sacrifices:

It would not be savoury or pleasant unless it were meant for human consumption, to be shared with people.

'... and mention the name of Allah on appointed days (of sacrifice) over the beast of cattle that He has bestowed upon them. Then eat of it and feed with it the poor unfortunate in need.'

(*Al-Hadaj* 22:28).

'And the sacrificial camels (or other animals meant to be sacrificed), We have made them

for you among the signs from Allah: in them is much good for you. So recite the name of Allah over them (before slaughtering them) as they line up (for sacrifice). Then when they are down on their sides (after slaughter), eat from them, and feed from them both contented (well to do) and needy. Thus (for this reason) have We made animals subject to you – so that you may be grateful.'

(*Al-Hajj* 22:36)

- Sacrifice would be acceptable to God only if it is for His sake. He will not approve of it if it is sacrificed for any 'gods' other than Him.

They assign to Allah, of the crops and the cattle, which He created, a portion, and they say of their own accord (in their own make-believe way): 'This is Allah's (portion)'; (and they say): 'and this is for His partners in regard to us.'

Thus that which they assign to his partners in them does not reach Allah; and that which they assign to Allah reaches to their 'partners.' (That is, neither portion reaches God as neither part is acceptable to Him. So God says:) Evil is their ordinance.

(*Al-An'aam* 6:137)

- Allah will not approve of it if people think they are making the sacrifice to feed God as He does not eat: 'He is the One who feeds and is not fed' (*Al-Ana'am* 6:14)

God does not accept a sacrifice because of His relishing its 'sweet smell' but because of the intention of the one who wants to make the sacrifice.

It is not their meat, nor their blood, that reaches Allah: it is your piety [*taqwah*] that reaches Him.

Thus has He made them subject to you that you may glorify or magnify the name of Allah [*li-tukabbirullahu*] for His guiding you: And give good tidings to the good-doers [*wa bash-shiril-muhsineen*].²

(*Al-Hadaj* 22:37)

In essence, there are certain basic conditions for offering to be acceptable to God:

- The sacrifice implies *Taqwah*, piety, the fear of God,

(Most English translators of the *Quran* have translated *Muhsineen* and *Swaliheen* as good-doers. However, *Swaliheen* are good-doers in the sense that they are law-abiders, fulfilling the rights of Allah [*Huqooqullah*], performing prayers and other rituals as required by Allah. As *Swaliheen*, they can also help in maintaining *Sulh*, peace, as peace-makers. The *Muhsineen*, on the other hand, are also good-doers, but they are likely to do [*Ihsan*], charity, beneficence for fellow human-beings. They are good-doers in the *Huqooqul-'Ibaad*. A *Swaleh* in the first sense has to be a believer. The *Swaleh*, in the second sense, as peace-maker and the *Muhsin* can be believers as well as non-believers. The believers would do their good deeds seeking the pleasure of Allah (SWT) Non-believers would do the good-deeds for their own personal pleasure or for the name and fame in this world. Each one gets the reward of his good work according to his own intentions, as the tradition of the Prophet (pbuh) confirms.

a willingness in the heart of the offerer to 'sacrifice' in the way of God.

- It provides the *Muhsineen*, the good-doers, among the well-to-do with an opportunity to share something with the poor people who will be getting something to eat:
- It has to be an offer to Allah (SWT) without a tinge of associating any one with Allah.

Naturally Cain, Abel, and their family members learned to eat the flesh before they thought of offering its best portions to God or for the sake of God. That is, they learned to share their possessions with their family members for the sake of Allah! Not very long after the incident of sacrifice, we find Cain asking Abel to go to his field to help him till. There Cain kills his brother out of jealousy as his own offering had been rejected and his brother's offering had been accepted. (*Genesis* 4:8; *Quran Al-Maidah* 5:27-31)

3. PROPHET NOAH (AS) LEARNS ABOUT 'CLEAN' ANIMALS

By the time Noah, (pbuh), was asked to prepare the ark and take pairs of animals for safety against the promised flood, the concept of clean and unclean animals had been very well established in the society (*Genesis* 7:2). *The Book of Genesis* didn't consider it imperative to name any animals from either kind. It was assumed that people knew which ones were clean and which ones were otherwise.

These 'clean' and 'unclean' animals will be detailed later by Moses, peace be upon him, in Leviticus, Chapter 11 onwards, and *Deuteronomy* chapter 14.

However, the author of the *Book of Genesis* tells us that, after the Flood, Noah (AS) was allowed to eat all animal flesh:

'Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.'

(*Genesis* 9:3.)

What was 'given' to Noah (AS) was picked up later by Paul. Of course, Paul would forget the fact that Noah (pbuh) was a strong-willed Prophet. He had cultivated a strong concept of 'clean' and 'unclean' animals. This distinction was recognised by all subsequent Prophets. This would include Jesus (peace be upon him) and, all we know for Paul is that he was claiming to have been an apostle of Jesus (AS), trying his best to do exactly the opposite of Jesus (AS) did.

However, *blood* was one thing man was not allowed to eat or drink even during the days of Noah, peace be upon him, who was told:

'Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.'

(*Genesis* 9:4)

This would preclude eating live animals, raw meat, blood dripping from the meat, etc. In modern times, we know blood to be the carrier of many diseases.

One of the most beautiful Surahs (Chapters) in Quran is a short surah called *Noah*. In this Surah, Prophet Noah (AS) tries to persuade his people to return to the remembrance of God and ask His forgiveness so that He may send rains for them and increase their progeny and increase their wealth and provisions and bestow on them Gardens and bestow on them rivers of flowing water for them. (*Noah* 71:11-12). But his people remained adamant.

WAS PROPHET NOAH (AS) INVOLVED IN DRINKING?

The Book of Genesis (verse 9: 20) says that Noah was the first tiller of the soil. This statement would be a surprise for a person who has read the earlier portion of the *Book of Genesis* where Adam (AS) and Qabel (Cain) had been described as cultivators. One would do well to remember that earlier on Adam had been mentioned as a tiller in the garden of Eden (*Genesis* 2:15) as well as outside it (*Genesis* 3:23). We also need to remember that Cain had been described as a tiller of the ground (*Genesis* 4:2). Obviously, it would not be correct to say that Noah (AS) was the first tiller of the soil. When we read a statement like this, we know right away that a basis for some greater fabrication is being laid – an untruth is soon going to follow, just wait and see. As they say a falsehood has no feet to stand on and perpetrators of such fabrications have short memories.

Noah (AS), had been preaching for so many years against people's corrupt ways. When he comes back from his historic passage in the ark after the deluge subsides,

he becomes the first 'tiller of the soil' according to the *Book of Genesis* (9:20). He is said to have 'planted a vineyard'. Before long, we find him drinking of the wine, and becoming drunk. He lay uncovered in his tent. Ham the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it upon both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away and they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son, Ham had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers." (*Genesis* 9:20-27)

Thus comes the curse of drinking to be followed by nakedness, a lot of cursing aimed at innocent people, and a loss of judgement. Those who have been reading how Noah struggled against corruption on the earth, how he had to face the Flood in order to get rid of the corruption, would now find it hard to accept this behaviour from the same person. People who saw Noah (pbuh) acting under the design and guidance of God, now find a prophet of his resolution cursing his sons and grandsons under the influence of strong drinks. They know that there is something wrong, something amiss. The two parts of the story do not fit together. If the first part of the story is true, the second part can not be correct. Should the episode about drinking and cursing be proved to be correct, there is no moral basis for this person to have called his people for so many hundreds of years to the right path. Drunkards cannot be prophets of God. We find it difficult to believe that such 'a person of resolute determination' [*oolul*

'*azm minar-rusul*], would, towards the end of his mission, get naked because of the wine, and curse generations of 'believers' for no fault of their own. Obviously, this is a fabrication, a *tabreef*, against God and His mighty Prophet. It is a tremendous distortion to have such a prophet of God involved in such a dirty affair. This same Noah (pbuh), a mighty Prophet of God, has otherwise been described in the *Book of Genesis* as 'blameless', one who 'walked with God,' doing 'all that God commanded him,' (*Genesis* 6:9, 10, 22.)

Prophets of God have thus been maligned by the scribes in order to find justification for their own iniquities. They invent such episodes of drinking against prophets in order to justify their own drinking orgies.

If we assess the possibility of such an incident ever to have taken place in the house of Noah (pbuh), we are faced with a couple of intriguing questions:

- The problem of drinking had been of this person's own doing. How could he justify cursing somebody else for a problem created by his own loss of judgement.
- It was Ham who was alleged to have seen his father's nakedness, not Canaan (Ham's son). Why would a Prophet of God curse the son for the mistake of his father?

The Quran, which is the Muhaiman, the discriminator, the keeper, helps us solve this problem as well. In a beautiful passage, *The Quran* gives us a proof of how Noah (pbuh) loved and cared for his family,

particularly his sons. When people and animals in the ark were ready to embark, Noah's wife and one of his sons, Yam, stayed behind, as they did not believe in him and were from among the infidels. Prophet Noah (pbuh) invited his son to join him in the ark.

And Noah called out to his son, and he had separated himself (from Noah to be with the non-believers): "O my son, embark with us and do not be one of the unbelievers." He (the son) said, "I shall take myself to a mountain. It will save me from the waters" (of the deluge you are promising)! Noah said, "This day nothing can save (anyone) from the command of Allah except those on whom be His mercy." And the waves came between them and he was among those who were drowned.

(*Quran Hood*, 11:42-43)

The son, a non-believer, sought protection on a mountain before he was taken away by the flood and drowned. Later on, the Prophet of God prayed to his God for the protection of his son. God admonished him for seeking salvation of a son who was not one of the family of believers.

And Noah called upon his *Rabb* (Lord) and said, "O *Rabb* (Lord), surely my son is of my family and your promise is true and you are the *Abkamul Hakimeen* (the Justest of the Just or the best of the Rulers)."

(*Hood* 11: 45)

Allah (SWT) had instructed Noah (peace be upon

him) thus:

‘take on board pairs of every species, male and female, and your family (except those of them against whom the word has already gone forth) and the believers.

(Hood 11: 40; *Al-Moeminoon* 23:27)

Noah (pbuh) was told that his son was not of the family of believers as his actions were unrighteous [*ghair salib*].... (Hood 11:46).

Some Monumental Distortions [*Tahreefaaf*]

The crude allegation suggesting that Prophet Noah (As) was lying naked because of drunkenness, invented against a prophet of God was meant to degrade the children of Canaan whom Israelites hated, and to glorify ‘Shem,’ the ancestor of Jews and Arabs, whose slave Canaan was prophesied to be.

This is only the beginning of such distortions. As we read the *Old Testament* further, we come across more of such fabrications when we come to the stories of Prophets Lot, Reuben, Judah, David’s son Amnon, peace be upon them all.

- There, we would get to read one of the greatest accusations that was ever invented against a Prophet of God where we ‘learn’ how Prophet Lot, after having been saved from witnessing other people’s sodomic orgies, gets involved in incest with his own daughters. Of course, this would all be due to the wine (*Genesis* 19:30-38.)

We also read about Reuben, the eldest of Jacob’s sons, who is reported to have committed incest with his father’s wife (that is, his half-mother, (*Genesis* 49:4).

We read about Judah, another son of Jacob, who commits incest with his own daughter-in-law, Tamar, considering her to be a harlot. (*Genesis* Chapter 38). The Authors and compilers of the *Old Testament* Interrupt the beautiful story of Joseph at the end of *Genesis* 37, to insert this entirely pornographic episode in *Genesis* Chapter 38, resuming the story of Joseph in *Genesis* 39. As a result of the incestuous encounter with her father-in-law, Tamar brought forth the twins Perez and Zerah who were to be the descendants of Judah and forefathers of all the Jews.

Later on in the holy Bible we read about David’s son Amnon who is reported to have committed incest, raping his own sister, again by the name of Tamar. (II *Samuel* 13:1-14).

Why had Such Distortions to be Fabricated?

Apparently these distortions served three main purposes.

- The first objective of the People of the Book had been to find justification for their own iniquities: if a prophet could commit incest, who are we not to commit it, was the usual live of argument. (The American and European communities that have been reading the Old Testament throughout the cen-

turies have the highest number of cases of incest with mothers, daughters, and sisters.)

- Furthermore, such distortions were also invented to degrade those tribes who had drifted out of the direct line of descent into being secondary tribes. The *Bani Israel* hated *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, the descendants of Lot's daughters. Of course, they were sired by their fathers Moab and Ammon. The Israelites, likewise, came to hate Ishmaelites (the sons of Isaac's brother Ishmael), Edomites, the sons of Esau (Jacob's brother), and so on so forth. Something nasty had to be said about such tribal offshoots.

- The best the Israelites have done to their distant relatives has been not to mention them altogether. Thus we don't hear much about the descendants of Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, after Joseph when Juda's (illegitimate) sons become the favourites. In the same vein we don't read about the descendants of the sons of Moses when the sons of Aaron become the priests (for ever). This only means that whoever gets out of the direct line of descent, he right away becomes non-entity at the best or the villain at the worst.

The racism that emanates from the Jewish Scriptures is very much human. It has nothing to do with God:

“When my angel goes out before you, and brings you to the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the

Hivites, and the Jebusites, and blot them out... you shall utterly overthrow them and break their pillars in pieces... I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you until you are increased and possess the land. And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the Sea of The Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hands, and you shall drive them out before you. You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me...”

(Exodus 23:23-33)

WHAT DID THE FIRST MIGHTY HUNTER HUNT IN CALAH?

As we leave Prophet Noah, peace be upon him, behind in pre-historic times, we come to more modern times in the land of Mesopotamia. Here we learn about Nimrod of Calah (near Nineveh, modern Mosul) ‘the first on earth to be a mighty man.’ He was a mighty hunter. (*Genesis* 10:9) The scripture doesn’t elaborate on what animals he hunted and for what purpose. However, we expect that the concept of ‘clean animals’ acquired by their ancestor Noah, applied to Nimrod’s people as well. We do not know specifically if they hunted animals just for game, or for skins – or for flesh as well.

5. WHAT FOODS DID THE PATRIARCHS EAT?

What Foods Did Abraham (AS) Eat?

Abraham (AS) was born in Ur and went on to Haran with his father and other members of his family.

“Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. ... Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sar'ai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and went forth together from Ur of the Chalde'ans to go into the land of Canaan; but when they came to Haran, they settled there..”

(Genesis 11:27-32)

From Haran he (pbuh) went on to Canaan, Egypt, back to Canaan, Paran (Arabia), and then back and forth in the adjoining lands. During his sojourns Ibraheem (AS) had a number of encounters with various kings and their people who were idolaters and associators. The major theme of contention was always the Unity of Allah (SWT).³ After each one of the encounters with an unbelieving people, Abraham (AS) had to move on to another land, looking for the new pastures for his sheep and a fertile ground where seeds of the Unity of God could be sowed. However, where-ever he went, he found

³Prophet Abraham's encounters with the associators are referred to in the Quran in Al-Baqarah 2:258, 260; Al-An'aam 6:74-83; Maryam 19:41-50; Al-Anbiyaa 21:51-71; Ash-Shu'uraa 26:70-82.

the people adamant in their ways of idolatry.

Eating and drinking habits were not a problem for the people among whom the Patriarch Ibraheem (AS) walked as most of the cultures he (AS) moved into at that time believed or practiced the restrictions people had learned from Enoch, Noah, Hood, and Saleh (peace be upon them all). The problem was that people left the edible food for their idols to eat and leave it to be blessed, so when the people came back from their meeting they would eat the food that had supposedly been blessed by the idols or the spirits during their absence. This practice continues in certain cultures even today. Zoroastrian Parsis, Hindus, Buddhists, Chinese have their food for their gods and spirits during their new year celebrations.

There used to be famines in those parts of the world during the days of Abraham (AS), so he (AS) used to have problems securing food from the Kings who wanted to be worshipped like gods before they would agree to provide grain to people. The incident alluded to in *Al-Baqarah* 2:258 refers to such an occasion when the argument led to the Prophet's asking the king to make the sun rise from the west if he was God. On another occasion, he (AS) is reported to have broken into pieces the idols in the temple when people had been out on an occasion like *sizdah* badar, the thirteenth of the New Year, Nowroz, when all people would leave their houses. Such an occasion is practiced in Iran even today. When the people came back to the town and found their gods in pieces, they decided to throw Ibraheem (AS) into fire. Quran reports how Allah (SWT) commanded fire to be cool and a source of security

and safety for Ibraheem (AS)

[*Qulnaa Yaa Naaru Koonee bardan wa salaman 'alaa Ibraheem.*]
(*Al-Anbiya* 21:69)

We said, "Oh fire, become cool and peaceful on Ibraheem"

This incident of fire happened somewhere in what was Mesopotamia: Ur, Babylon, Nimrud, Calah, or Haran.

The Lord blessed Ibraheem (AS) and made him a source of blessings for all the nations of the world.

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country.. to the land that I will show you. And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing (for all nations). I will bless those who will bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves."

(*Genesis* 12:1-3)

Egyptian King's Gift For Sarai

During such a famine in the land of Canaan, Abraham (AS) went to Egypt with sheep, oxen, he-asses, she-asses, and camels, and menservants where the patriarch had encounters with the king regarding Sarai his wife. (*Genesis* 12: 16.)

When Abraham came to Egypt, the Pharaoh sent him a gift of sheep, oxen, he-asses, menservants, maid-servants, she-asses, and camels because of Sarai, his wife. (*Genesis* 12:16.) When he returned from the land of Egypt, Abram (to be named later on 'Abraham,' please be upon him) was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.. (*Genesis* 13:1-2)

Abraham (AS) Offers Foods To His Guests

During the days of Abraham (AS), we find a well-established diet of people who knew God. When he (AS) was visited at the oaks of Mamre by angels who were on their way to the people of Lot, Abraham (AS) asked his wife to make three cakes of bread, and then he ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds, and milk, and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them (his guests to eat)... (*Genesis* 18:7-8.) Whether the angels ate anything of the food or not is another story! This story has been narrated in the *Quran* in a number of places, for example, Hood 11: 69-76, Al-Hijr 15:51-60, *Adh-Dhariyat* 51:24, where Ibraheem (pbuh) feels a sort of fear in his heart when he finds his guests not stretching their hands to eat. The guests give him good tidings of a son (Isahaq, (AS)) and tell him that they were on a mission to destroy the people of Loot. Ibraheem (AS) argues with the angels about saving the people if there were any believers in those cities. With a tender feeling of affection, Allah (SWT) says,

"Then when fear (alarm) had left Ibraheem and the glad tidings had come home to

him, he took to disputing with Us for the people of Lut. Indeed Ibraheem was for-bearing, long-suffering, penitent. [*Inna Ibrahima la-Haleemun Awwabun Muneeb.*] O Ibraheem, leave off this; the decree from your Lord has already approached, and indeed upon them an advancing torment is unavoidable.”

(*Hood* 11:74-76)

The Covenant of Abraham (AS) With Abimelech

Abraham, peace be upon him, made a covenant of peace with Abimelech at Beer-Sheba, giving his adversary 'seven ewe lambs.' (*Genesis* 21:27-30), in order to make the covenant a lasting one.

The Camel In The Lives of The Patriarchs

Ibraheem (AS) sends Pre-Dowry To Nahore For Rebekah's hand for Isahaq: Ten Camels

Abraham, peace be upon him, sent his servant to his brother Nahore (who was in Haran), with ten camels to get his son Isaac a wife. This girl will turn out to be the celebrated Rebekah, the mother of the famous twins: Jacob (Israel) and Esau. The importance of camels in the lives of the Patriarchs can be assessed from the fact that only *Genesis* Chapter 24, narrating the story of Rebekah mentions them 14 times.

Jacob or Israel (AS) shares milch camels with Esau

Jacob (pbuh) ran away to Laban, his maternal uncle (in Haran), fearing the wrath of Esau whom he had deceived out of Isaac (AS), their father's blessings. Jacob (pbuh) took care of Laban's flock of sheep and goat, from which later on he took his share. (*Genesis* Chapters 20 and 31). After a number of years, when he was ready for return to Beer-Sheba from Haran, he had a large flock of camels, including milch camels some of which he shared with Esau to soften the anger Esau might still be harbouring against him. The gift consisted of servants and cattle including 30 milch camels along with their foals. (*Genesis* 32:13-15)

These passages show us what animals the patriarch Abraham (AS) and his descendants considered worthy of rearing in their herds, sharing with their friends and relatives, and eating. Certain other animals (popular in other cultures with other neighbouring people) were not even mentioned in any business transactions and social dealings. For example, pigs are not mentioned in the *Old Testament* until the times of Moses (AS) when he found the neighbouring people eating them. The Prophet (AS) specifically forbade the Israelites to eat them.

One major principle we learn from the *Holy Quran* is that no part of the prohibited [*Haram*] animal would be allowed to be consumed; and likewise, no consumable part of a lawful [*halal*] animal would be rendered prohibited or unlawful. Had the camel, for example, been unlawful [*haram*], its milk would have been

prohibited for consumption and its wool and skin would have been too unclean [*najas*] to wear as garments. As the milk of camels was *halal* for the patriarchs (Jacob and Esau) and their families, their flesh had also been lawful to them. As horses and donkeys are not, strictly speaking, permitted to Jews and Muslims, they don't consume their milk either neither do they use their hides as clothes or shoes.

Prophets Elijah & John the Baptist wore garments made of camel hair

Elijah wore a garment of haircloth (wool), with a girdle of leather about his loins. (II Kings 1:8). The earlier Zechariah confirms the custom of Prophets wearing garments made of camel hair. He envisions a day (after the last Prophet has already prophesied) when pretenders to Prophecy will not be able to deceive people by wearing mantles made of (camel) hair:

'On that day every Prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; he will not put on a hairy mantle in order to deceive, but he will say, 'I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the soil...'

(*Zechariah* 13:1-5)

John the Baptist wore a garment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. (Matthew: 3:4-5).

Quran's Evidence About What Abraham (pbuh) Did With His Camels

Patriarch Abraham, peace be upon him, was asked by

Abraham (AWT) to call people to Makkah for pilgrimage. He has told that people would come there on whatever means of transport they got hold of. This would mainly include 'lean, weak, camels.'

And remember when We prepared for Abraham the place of the (holy) House, saying: 'Ascribe you nothing as partner unto Me, and purify my house for those who circumambulate (go round the Ka'aba), and those who stand (in the prayer), and those who bow (in prayer), And those who prostrate (in prayer).'

And proclaim to mankind the pilgrimage: they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; They will come from every deep ravine.

(*Quran* 22:26-27)

On this pilgrimage, people would bring their cattle, sheep, goat, oxen, and camels to be sacrificed; and for Abraham (pbuh) and his descendants cattle included sheep, goat, oxen, and camels as Quran tells us:

Eight pairs: Of the sheep twain, and of the goat twain... and of the camels twain, and of the oxen twain.

(*Al-An'aam* 6:144-145)

Right from the days of Abraham (pbuh), camel had been one of the four domesticated animals to be sacrificed and distributed among poor, needy, friends, neighbours, and relatives.

And mention the name of Allah on appointed days (of pilgrimage) over the beast of cattle that He (God) has bestowed upon them. Then eat of it and feed with it the poor unfortunate (deprived).

(*Al-Hajj* 22:28)

What Foods Did Israel/Jacob (AS) Eat?

Prophet Isahaq (Isaac's) son Yaqoob (Jacob), peace be upon them both, 'was a quiet man, dwelling in tents, whereas Esau was a skillful hunter a man of the field. Isaac loved Esau because he used to eat of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.' (*Genesis* 25:27-28.)

Birth-Right (Prophethood) Is Sold For Pottage of Red Lentils

We don't know what animals Esau hunted, but, apparently, he wouldn't be hunting indiscriminately, because, at least once he came back starving without having hunted any game that he could eat. He had to 'sell' his right of the first born away to his twin-brother Jacob (pbuh), who was supposed to have been born after Esau, for the red porridge (or pottage) made of lentils.

Once when Jacob was boiling pottage, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red pottage, for I am famished (i.e. hungry)." ... Jacob said, "First sell me your birth right." Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birth right to me?" Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore

to him, and sold his birth right to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils, and he ate and drank, and rose, and went his way..."

(*Genesis* 25:29-34)

Esau's game would perhaps be gazelle or deer, as he had to taste like goat-kids Jacob's mother prepared for Jacob to take to Isaac in order to be blessed instead of Esau.

It is difficult for us to find it credible that sons of Abraham and Isahaq (peace be upon them both) would be cheating their family members out of their shares of first-born at the price of a piece of bread and pottage of red lentils. We also find it difficult to believe that Isahaq (peace be upon him) could bless only one person (having spent away the only blessing he possessed.) Even when he knew he had been cheated by his son with the connivance of his wife, he found himself so helpless that he could not bless the one he had always wanted to bless. Such a story just can not be true, because we have evidence from Quran that Prophets behaved differently. For Example, Jacob (peace be upon him) was willing to forgive his ten sons who had deprived him of his beloved son Yousuf for many years, and ask Allah (SWT) for their forgiveness.

They said, "O our father, pray for us forgiveness of our sins; indeed we have been at fault (sinners)." He said, "Presently shall I pray my Lord for your forgiveness. Indeed, He, only He is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

(*Yusuf* 12:97-98)

Joseph (pbuh) had equally been magnanimous in forgiving his brothers when they accepted their wrongdoing:

They said, "Indeed Allah has chosen you above us, and we have been sinners indeed!"
He said, "No reproach is on you today.
May Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of the Merciful!"

(Yusuf 12:91-92)

The Myth of the Inheritance of the First Born

In addition to these objections, we understand that the idea of the first-born getting the choicest place in the family or inheriting everything from the father has been a human conception. It had nothing divine in it. God has made it clear in so many examples, but human beings refuse to learn:

- Between Ismael and Isahaq (peace be upon them) Ismael was the eldest, but for the sons of Isahaq of course, it was their own father who was the chosen one of God.
- Between Esau and Jacob (peace be upon them) Jacob the younger was the chosen one for the sons of Jacob (Israel).
- Among the twelve sons of Jacob (pbuh), the most chosen one in the eyes of Allah (SWT) and their own father was Yousuf. But Jews took Judah to be the chosen one – and he was neither the eldest nor the youngest.

Between Aaron and Moses (pbu both), Allah's choice was the younger, Moses upon whose request the other brother joined the ministry. But for Jews, it were the sons of Aaron who were to be the priests.

In Islamic history, it was Abdullah the youngest son of Abdul Muttalib who had the honour to be the father of the last Prophet (pbuh).

Again, according to the Islamic Law of inheritance, the wealth of the father is to be divided on the basis of a certain formula according to which all sons get equal shares (without reference to who is elder and who is younger), similarly all daughters get equal shares (without reference to who is older and who is younger), and other members get their shares according to what has been prescribed by Allah (SWT).

What was forbidden to Jacob (AS)?

Israel (Jacob) prohibits himself some foods) The *Book of Genesis* 32:24-32 describes a curious fight of Jacob with a mysterious 'man,' who later on, turned out to be either an angel or God. They fought all night. When the 'man' saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, putting his thigh out of joint... Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the sinew of the hip...

This is the first case of Israelites prohibiting themselves something which God had permitted them to eat. Israelites also forbade themselves certain kind of fat on a permitted animal. The Magnificent *Quran* tells us why:

for their rebellion.

And to those who are Jews We forbade every animal with claws. And of the oxen and the sheep forbade We to them the fat of it save that upon the backs or the entrails, or that which is mixed with bone. That We awarded them for their rebellion. And behold, We, indeed We are Truthful.

(*Quran Al-An'aam* 6:147)

During the days of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) Jews used to object to Muslims' eating camel meat. They used to base their objection on the prohibition by Moses according to the books of *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy*. There was a clear response from the revelation to the effect that the Patriarchs Abraham and Isaac and their families were not Jews. They were not followers of the Law of Moses. The Torah was sent to Moses a long time after the days of Patriarchs Ibraheem and Isaac (peace be upon them) used to eat what was later on prohibited by Jacob (Israel) to himself (for a certain reason) or what was forbidden by Moses to his people because of their disobedience. As Islam claimed to be a continuum of the religion of Abraham (pbuh), it forbade to Muslims what was forbidden to Abraham (pbuh), making lawful for them what was lawful to Abraham (pbuh). Responding to the objections of the non-Muslims regarding Islamic dietary laws, *Quran* says:

All food was lawful unto the Children of Israel, save that which Israel forbade himself (in days) before the Torah was revealed.

May: Produce the Torah and read it (to us)
If you are truthful.

(*Quran* 3:93)

DRINKING DURING THE DAYS OF PATRIARCHS

Drinking During The Days Of Ibraheem (PBUH)

The *Book of Genesis* tells us that when Lot (pbuh) was taken captive along with other people of Sodom by King Chedor-laomer and his allies, Abraham, peace be upon him, went in the pursuit of the captors of Lot, peace be upon him, and brought back all the captives and cattle and goods, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh bringing him 'bread and wine'. And Melchizedek, the high priest of Salem blessed Abraham, saying:

Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Maker of Heaven and earth; and blessed (or praised) be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies in to your hands.

(*Genesis* 14:11-20.)

The king offered to hand over all the booty to Abram, but Abraham, peace be upon him, refused to take anything, 'not even a thread or a sandal-thong'.

He said:

"I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, maker of heaven and earth, that I would not take a thread or a sandal-thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' I will take

nothing but what the young men had eaten, allowing his other allies to take their share.”
(*Genesis* 14:21-24.)

The text implies that Abraham (pbuh) did not eat or drink anything. It further mentions explicitly his young men eating.

Although at this stage, wine was not particularly prohibited, Muslims don't believe Allah Most High, after having chosen Abraham and his descendants as Prophets, peace be upon them all, to be models of behaviour for mankind, would allow them to sink so low as to imitate the evil ways of other people. Receiving *Wahy* (revelation) from Allah Most High and drinking wine that takes away judgment – the two don't go together.

Surely an excellent pattern is (set) for you in Ibraheem and those with him; (Remember) when they said to their people: “Verily we are quit (blameless) of you and what you worship beside Allah, and we renounce you; and there has established between us and you hostility and hatred for ever; until you believe in Allah alone...”

(*Quran, Al-Mumtabinah* 60:4..)

We can't imagine looking at Abraham (pbuh), ‘the father of Prophets’, as a person receiving the word of God under the influence of a drink ‘khumr’ that takes away perception and understanding. Fortunately, the scribes of *The Old* and *The New Testaments* spared accusing Ibraheem (peace be upon him) to have been

directly involved in drinking, as they did in the case of Prophet Lot (pbuh).

Drinking During The Days Of LOT (PBUH)

Prophet Lot (pbuh) was a nephew of Ibrahim (pbuh) according to the *Book of Genesis* (11:27-32). He migrated with Ibraheem (pbuh) from Haran to Canaan, Egypt, back to Canaan, and into Negeb. He was the only one person (with the exception of, perhaps, Sarai peace be upon her) who believed in Ibraheem (pbuh), and his migration with his uncle has been reported by Allah (SWT) in the Quran:

And Lut believed in him [*fa-aamana labnu Loot*] And he said, indeed I will emigrate to my Lord, indeed He is the Mighty, the Wise.
(*Al-'ankabut* 29:26)

They had pitched their tents between Bethel and Ai. Ibraheem and Lot (peace be upon both of them) had such numerous flocks that the land could not support both of them living together... and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. Between the two of them they decided to go in different directions. Lot decided to go to the Jordan valley, journeying east from where they were (between Bethel and Ai). Abraham decided to dwell in the land of Canaan... by the oaks of Mamre which are at Hebron.

Chapter 18 of the *Book of Genesis* takes us to the story of the Guests of Ibraheem. This story has been told in the Quran in a number of places like (*Hud*

11:69-76, *Al-Hijr* 15:51-60, *Al-Ankabut* 29:31, *Adh-dhaariyaat* 51:24) Angels told Ibraheem (pbuh) that they were going to destroy the land and people of Lut (pbuh). The first part of Chapter 19 of the *Book of Genesis* gives us the story of destruction of Sodom and Gomor'rah and the flight of Lot to Zoar. According to the story, the angels have argument with the people of the cities who persist on their evil ways. Allah (SWT) destroys the cities, saving Loot (pbuh) and some members of his family. Later part of this chapter again, is the distorted version of what happened after Loot left the city while he went out of Zoar (as he was afraid to live there) and went to live in a cave with his two daughters. This is what happened at the cave according to the *Book of Genesis*:

And the first born said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all earth. Come, let's make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we preserve offspring through our father...."

So between the two of them, they got their father drunk and went to lie with him.

"Thus both the daughters were with child by their father. The first born bore a son, and called his name Moab, he is the father of the Moabites. the younger also bore a

⁴This part of the story appears in the *Quran* in a number of places (*Hud* 11:77-83, *Al-Hijr* 15:60-77, *Al-Anbiyaat* 21:71, 74-75, *Ash-Shu'raa* 26:160-175, *An-Namal* 27:54-58, *Al-Ankaboot* 29:28-35, *As-Sajda* 37:113-138)

son, and called his name Ben-ammi (that is, the son of my mother), and he is the father of the Ammonites to this day." (*Genesis* 19:30-38)

It is strange that a Prophet of God should escape from the orgies of the sodomites (homosexuals) only to get himself involved in the act of incest. This is against the sense of decency [*ghairah*] of Allah (SWT) who can not allow such an indecent thing to happen to His Prophet. What Allah (SWT) has said about Yusuf (pbuh) is true about all Prophets that He protects them against all the evil and indecency:

Thus did We (do) in order that We might avert from him all evil [*Soo'a*] and indecency [*fahshah*]. Indeed he was one of the sincere-hearted [*mukhliseen*] of our bondmen.

(*Yusuf* 12:24)

This issue has already been discussed under Noah, pbuh. (In pages 32 - 39)

7. WHAT FOODS DID THE PEOPLE OF MOSES (AS) EAT?

The People of Moses (AS) In The Wilderness:

Water the Source of Life and source of Strife

When Moses (pbuh) led Israel from the Red Sea into the wilderness of Shur, they found no water for three days during their journey. During their exodus in the wilderness, the Israelites had water problem at a number

of places. When they did find water, it was bitter, *Marrarah* in *Hebrew*. So they called the place *Marrah*. Lord showed Moses (AS) a tree that was to be thrown into the water to make the water sweet. Thus they were provided with sweet water to drink at a place where there had been nothing but bitter water. (*Exodus* 15:22-25)

Then they came to Elim where they had twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees. (*Exodus* 15:27) When they moved on to Reph'idim, they encountered the same problems and murmured against Allah (SWT) and against Moses (AS). Lord said to him:

Pass on before the people.. and take in your hand the rod with which you struck Nile, and go. Behold I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and the water shall come out of it that the people may drink."

(*Exodus* 17:5-6)

This incident has been retold in the *Quran* with a moral about being grateful and not spreading mischief on the earth:

And (remember) when Moses asked for water for his people. We said, "Smite with your staff the rock!" Then there gushed forth from it twelve springs so that each tribe knew its drinking place. (We said to them): "Eat and drink of the provision of Allah: And make not mischief on the earth as corruptors."

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:60,
Al-A'raaf 7:160-162)

Israel get Mann and Salvah

From Elim they moved on to Sin (which was between Eon and Sinai). In Sin they were provided with bread which was rained from heaven for them. 'Lord gives you in the evening flesh to eat and in the morning bread as the full.' (*Exodus* 16:8). *Salvah* was like the meat of quails or tasted like it. *Manna* was something like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. But they were strictly required to gather according to their needs for one day only. Proper provision was made for the *sabbath*. The food could not be stored or saved for another day. But human beings will be greedy.

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning dew lay round about the camp. And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as hoarfrost on the ground...

(*Exodus* 16:13-15)

The *Quran* relates this story with a purpose: Eat of the clean things provided by God and do not spread violence or corruption [*fasaad*] on the earth after there has been peace on it.

And We caused the white cloud to overshadow you; and We sent down upon you *Manna* and *Salvah* (Something like quails and coriander seed); (saying)

"Eat of the clean, good things [tayyibaat]

with which We have provided you. And they wronged not Us (or We wronged them not) [*wa maa Dhalamoona*] (when they disobeyed). But themselves they were wont to wrong.. (or But they were the ones who wronged themselves.)

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:57)

Why was it called *Mann*?

When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" [in Hebrew and Arabic *man huwa*] For they did not know what it was.

(*Exodus* 16:15)

Now the house of Israel called its name *Mann*; it was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers, made with honey.... and the people of Israel ate the *mann* forty years till they came to a habitable land..the border of the land of Canaan."

(*Exodus* 16:31, 35)

Some Muslim scholars think it was called 'Mann' because it was a favour 'Mann', of Allah (SWT) [*Ni'matalah*] on Bani Israel in specific circumstances. Allah (SWT), speaking to Moses (AS) at the Toor, tells the Prophet that He had bestowed his Manna on Moses even before this incident. This refers to His saving him from being killed at the hands of Pharaoh and to be sent right under Pharaoh's roof to be lived, nourished, protected, and brought up.

And indeed We conferred a favour upon you another time (before)...

Wa laqad mannanaa 'alaika marratin ukhra...

(*Taba* 20:37)

This idea is also expressed in the words 'Ni'amah' of Allah (SWT):

And Moses said to his people,

And remember Allah's favours [*Ni'amatalah*] to you,

And remember when your Lord proclaimed, "If you express gratitude, I will give you more [*la in shakartum, la azeedannakum*]... (*Surah Ibrahim* 14:6-7)

Allah (SWT) said,

"And We wished to be Gracious to (confer a favour upon) those who were being depressed in the land..." "*Nureedu an namunna 'alal-ladheena istudh'ifu fil 'ardbi...*" (*Al-Qasas* 28:5)

Allah (SWT) conferred this *manna*, this favour, on Moses when He saved him from being killed (*Taba* 20:37) and when He chose him and his brother Aaron to be Prophet (*As-Saafaat* 37:114). He conferred this favour on the Bani Israel when He took them out of Egypt from the clutches of Pharaoh and provided food

for them in the wilderness. He (SWT) conferred the *mann*, this favour, on Muslims when He guided them on the faith:

*bali-Allahu yamunnu 'alaikum an badaakum
lil 'eemaan...*

(*Al-Hujraat* 49:17)

Coming to Habitable Areas:

How the Bani Israel came to the habitable land is related by *Quran*: as a punishment for having been discontented with *Manna* and *Salvah*. But man was not created to be satisfied with one kind of food or one kind of situation. Soon the Israelites were craving for onions, garlic, vegetables, and lentils – “trading that which was the best for that which was the worst.”

And (remember) when you (O Bani Isra-elite) said: ‘Oh Moses, we are weary of one kind of food; so call upon your Lord for us that He bring forth for us that which the earth grows – of its herbs and its cucumbers and its corn and its lentils and its onions...’

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:61)

A business transaction of real loss! Exchanging the best for the worst!

He (Moses, pbuh) said: ‘Would you exchange that which is superior for that which is inferior? Go down then to settled country, thus you shall get that which you demand...’

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:61)

There is always some kind of punishment for being discontented disobedient transgressors:

And thus humiliation and wretchedness were stamped upon them and they were visited with wrath from Allah. That was because they disbelieved in Allah’s revelations and the prophets, wrongfully. That (punishment) was for their disobedience and transgression.

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:61)

Entering a Township

And (remember) when We said: ‘Go into this township and eat freely of that which is in it, and enter the gate prostrating (to God in gratitude), And say, ‘Repentance.’ We will forgive you your sins and will increase (reward) for the right-doers.’

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:58)

But those who did wrong changed the word which had been told them for another saying, and We sent down upon the evil doers wrath from heaven for their evil doing.

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:59)

8. MOSES (PBUH) DECLARES CRITERIA ON WHICH ANIMALS WOULD BE PERMITTED OR PROHIBITED

In the *Book of Leviticus* Chapter 11 and *Deuteronomy* 14 come the commandments that have ruled eating habits

of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim peoples. The one exception in the Christian dietary system, borrowed from the Greek and Roman gentiles, is what has separated them from Jewish and Muslim people for all these centuries. The command begins concerning the divine authority:

And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron: Say to the People of Israel, 'These are the living things which you may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Whatever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat.

(*Leviticus* 11: 1-2)

Before the lists of permitted and prohibited animals are provided, we have two major criteria for the beasts from among the animals which are permissible to eat:

- Whatever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed and
- chews the cud

If the animal does one and not the other, it is automatically out. Exceptions of animals that meet one criterion but not the other are listed: the camel, the rock badger, the hare, and the swine. The Camel, the rock badger, and the hare are not to be eaten because they chew the cud but do not part the hoof. That's why they are unclean to the people of Moses' (pbuh), according to *Leviticus* 11:4-7.

Leviticus Chapter 11 begins with the list of the prohibited animals. At the top of the list is camel, to be followed by rock badger, hare, and the swine. The

Chapter goes on to list water animals, birds, winged insects, and the swarming things (reptiles), etc. Such animals are unclean and are not to be eaten. Jewish people are told that they would be defiled even if they touched them.

These Dietary Laws are again mentioned in Deuteronomy Chapter fourteen with a positive list for animals that are lawful to eat:

'These are the animals you may eat:...
(*Deuteronomy* 14:3-5.)

The list includes the ox, the sheep, the goat, the hart, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wildgoat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep.

Swine is prohibited because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but does not chew the cud. (*Leviticus* 11:3-7)

'Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch; they are unclean to you.

(*Leviticus* 11:8)

The animals that are in the water and have 'fins and scales' are allowed to be eaten. Anything that does not have fins and scales 'is an abomination to you.' (*Leviticus* 11:9-12)

Birds which are not allowed are listed in detail (*Leviticus* 11:13-19; and *Deuteronomy* 14:12):

the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, the kite,

the falcon, the raven, the ostrich, the night hawk, the sea gull, the hawk, the owl, the cormorant, the ibis, the water hen, the pelican, the carrion vulture, the stork, the heron, the hoopoe, and the bat.

The 'winged insects' which are prohibited are listed in *Leviticus* 11: 20-23;

- animals going on all fours which are unclean even to touch (*Lev.* 11:24-28);
- and swarming things (the great lizard, the gecko, the land crocodile, the lizard, and the chameleon) which are unclean. (*Leviticus* 11:29-38).
- The dead animal is prohibited to eat: 'You shall not eat anything that dies of itself.' (*Leviticus* 11:21)
- If an animal that is otherwise allowed to eat dies, it is unclean even to touch. (*Leviticus* 11: 39-40) This implies strong prohibition of touching a dead animal, leave alone eating it.

The Muhaiman (Quran) Confirms And Corrects What Was Prohibited to the People of the Book

The Quran tells the Prophet (Peace be upon him) about the four basic items which had been prohibited to the People of the Book:

'Say (to them Oh Prophet!): "I do not find in that which is revealed to me (that is in the *Quran*) anything prohibited to an eater that he eat of it - except that it be

- carrion (dead animals),
- or dripping (pouring forth) blood,
- or swine-flesh;
- or the abomination which was immolated (slaughtered in sacrifice) to the name of other than Allah."

(*Al-An'aam* 6:146)

We have similar message in other places with some details bringing the number of the prohibited cases to eleven:

He (God) has forbidden you (for food)

- carrion (dead animals),
- and blood,
- and swineflesh,
- and that which has been immolated (dedicated) to any one other than Allah. (2:173.; 5:3; 16:115.)
- and the strangled,
- and the dead through beating,
- and the dead through falling from a height,
- and that which has been killed by (the goring of) horns;
- and the devoured of wild beasts saving that which you make lawful (by slaughtering properly before it dies),
- and that which has been immolated to idols;
- and forbidden is that which you swear by the divining arrows.

All this is an abomination [*fissq*]... (*Al-Maa'idah* 5:3..)

The Camel, Again!

There is no positive evidence in the *Old Testament* that the Patriarchs before Moses (pbuh) did not eat camel meat. Direct evidence from the *Old Testament* shows that the Patriarchs used camels for milk, wool, and hides (see pages 44-48). In addition to this, indirect internal evidence from the text suggest that they consumed camel meat before the Books of *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy* were written (a long time after the death of Moses, pbuh). The indirect external evidence from the Arab tradition proves incontrovertibly that the patriarchs, who were the forefathers of Ishmael (pbuh) and other Arabs, were used to eating camel meat. There is no direct evidence that the patriarchs did not eat camel meat.

- a. With regard to Camel we have already looked at the evidence from the *Old Testament* that Jacob or Israel (pbuh) and his family consumed Camel milk. People don't drink milk of animals which are otherwise prohibited. No one among the 'People of the Book' is known to have consumed milk of swine, dogs, horses, donkeys, or she-mules. Neither is there any proof that the patriarchs sent gifts of milch mares, milch swines, or milch donkeys to their relatives or friends.
- b. We have further looked at the evidence from the Scriptures that Prophets Elijah and John the Baptist wore garments made of camel hair. No one from among prophets or their followers is known to have worn garments made of the hides of swines, donkeys, mares or mules.
- c. We have further evidence from the *Quran* that

Abraham not only ate camel meat, but he was commanded by Allah (SWT) to offer it as sacrifice during the pilgrimage at Makkah.

As we have seen earlier (page 44-48) from different sources, Prophets Ibrahim, Isahaq, and Jacob, Elijah, and John's lives had a great deal to do with camel's flesh, milk, and hair. It would be good to remember that the *Torah* was put down into writing long time after the death of Moses (pbuh). Only the Ten Commandments had been written for him by God which he had later on copied. This entire work was, again, lost during the first exile to Babylon. The Prophet Ezra is reported to have re-written all the Books available up to that time. Biblical scholars point to many cases of distortions and interpolations additions and deletions that took place later on. Precisely at what stage of their history and in what circumstances 'Camel' came to be listed with the swine, we do not know. All we know is that the Camel did not belong to the group to which horse, donkey, and mule belonged. It is such a wonderful animal that Allah (SWT) reproaches people for not looking at it. It's another way of recommending people to have a look of amazement at it:

Don't they look at the camels, how they have been created, and at the sky how they have been raised, and at the mountain, how they have been rooted, and at the earth, how it has been outspread; then admonish them (counsel them, guide them); indeed you are an admonisher (a guide)!
(*Al-Ghashiya* 88:17-20).

Dr. Javid Aziz Awan points out the error in Biblical

description of the anatomy of the camel's foot.⁵ He says:

There seems to be an error in the Holy Bible concerning the anatomy of the camel's foot. A cursory look at the camel's foot shows that it is entirely different from that of the horse or ass which are single-hoofed. The camel's foot, anatomically speaking, comprises two digits only, just like the goat and the cow. This foot is well designed to cope with the loose sandy soil of the desert... Hence the slightly deceiving appearance that the hoof is not quite split into two is a result of the adaptability of the camel to the nature of the terrain..” (page 20)

It wouldn't be out-of-place to quote again the passage from the *Quran* exhorting Ibrahim (peace be upon him) to sacrifice camels in the way of Allah (SWT):

And the sacrificial camels (or other animals meant to be sacrificed), We have made them for you among the signs from Allah: in them is much good for you. So recite the name of Allah over them (before slaughtering them) as they line up (for sacrifice).

⁵Professor Javaid Aziz of Faisalabad Agriculture University (Pakistan) in his article “LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL FOODS OF THE PEOPLES OF THE SCRIPTURES”, published in ‘*Islamic Thought And Scientific Creativity*’, A Quarterly Journal of The COMSTECH, Vol 1, No. 2, June 1990 (page 17-30) quotes R.T. Wilson's book (1984) *The Camel*, Longman group limited.

Then when they are down on their sides (after slaughter), eat from them, and feed from them both contented (well to do) and needy. Thus (for this reason) have We made animals subject to you – so that you may be grateful.

(*Al-Hajji* 22:36)

Some special prohibitions for Jews: as punishment for their rebellion

And for those who are Jews We forbade every animal with claws. And of the oxen and the sheep forbade We to them the fat of it, save that (which is) upon the backs of the entrails (vital organs, particularly intestines, the guts), or that which is mixed with the bone. That (restriction) we awarded them for their rebellion. And Indeed We are the Truthful.

(*Al-An'aam* 6:147)

9. KINDS OF OFFERINGS PRACTICED BY THE JEWISH PEOPLE

The first eight chapters of *The Book of Leviticus* describe 'burnt offering,' cereal offering, peace offering, sin offering, and guilt offering. References to all these offerings suggest what animals were considered worthy of such offerings: sheep, goat, ram, bull, turtle doves, and pigeons. No dogs, cats, pigs, horses, or donkeys are named either for offering or for common consumption.

- The burnt offering shall be a male animal without

- blemish from the herd (*Leviticus* 1:3-17).
- Peace offering could be a male or a female animal from the herd, without blemish (*Lev.* 3:1-2).
- For the sin offering, a young bull .. or a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat .. or two turtledoves or two young pigeons (*Leviticus* Chapters 4 and 5) depending upon the severity of the sin.
- For the guilt offering.. a ram without a blemish, (*Leviticus* 5:18.)

The Scriptures go on to describe how the priest will sacrifice these animals. It is noteworthy that the priest has to be from the family of Aaron, not even Moses (peace be upon them both)! We are told that God got angry with King Saul because he had taken upon himself the responsibility of offering sacrifices. We can see whose importance was being eroded or threatened! Certainly it was not God's. One may wonder how sons of Aaron came to acquire such importance whereas sons of Moses are hardly ever mentioned. One may ask what happened to the sons of Moses. Who threw them out of the lime-light of the temple activities? The answer is another simpler question: Who threw the descendants of Lot, Ishmael, Esau, and Joseph out of lime-light of Jewish religious tradition? We see Israelites later on fighting with each one of them.

1. *The Old Testament* stories are unlike the stories of *Iliad* of Homer, *Mahabhartha*, or *Shabnama* of Firdowsi where all the contestants are depicted as heroes or gods. In the Old Testament, descendants of Prophets become villains as soon as they are one step out of the direct line of pedigree.
2. There has been hardly any nation on the earth so

uncompromising on the race issue as the Jewish people. The progeny of anybody from Hebrew ethnic that was not 100 % (from both parents) Jewish were refused recognition among the Jewish people. We have already alluded to Ammonites, Ishmaelites, Edomites, Joseph's sons, Moses' sons, who were not duly recognised by the Jewish Community as their mothers were non-Hebrew:

Ammonites, the descendants of Lot as his wife was from Sodom and his daughters were married to non-Hebrews.

Ishmaelites because their mothers were non-Hebrew.

Edomites, the descendants of Esau who is reported to have taken his wives from Canaanites, and one of his wives, Basemath, was Ishmael's daughter.

Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph were not sons of a Jewish woman, but those of an Egyptian woman, As'enath, the daughter of Poti'phera the priest of On.

The sons of Moses **Gershom** and **Eliezer** were not sons of a Jewish woman, but those of Zaiphorah (Saforah), the daughter of Jethro the Priest of Midian (according to Islamic tradition Jethro is known as Prophet Shu'aib of Madyan). That is why they were not recognised as Jewish. Aaron and Maryam are reported to have raised objections to Moses' marrying a Cushite woman. Although, apparently both of them were punished for such arrogance (*Numbers* 12:1-16), the Jewish people did not recognise her sons as Jewish either.

THE PASSOVER FOOD

When Bani-Israel were still in Egypt, languishing as slave workers under the Pharaoh, Moses (peace be upon him) brought a message from God asking Pharaoh to release his people. The message was accompanied by signs: the rod, the luminous hand, the floods, the locusts, the lice, the frogs, the blood (as referred to in Quran: 7:107, 108, 133; and narrated in detail in *The Old Testament*, Exodus from chapter 9 to chapter 11). The greatest of the signs was the visit of death in the Egyptian families when every first born child died. The Jews had marked their doorsteps with the blood of a lamb to signify that they were the children (or the chosen ones) of God. The firstborn of the Israelites were spared. Death passed over them. This happened on the 14th of Nisan. This incident occurred soon before the exodus which was also a great step towards salvation or freedom. Later on, through Moses (pbuh), Allah (SWT) required the Israelites to celebrate both of these occasions for seven days (from Nisin 15 to 22), Pesah or Pesach in Judaism (Wesaakh in Hinduism).

During the Passover, Israelites were told by Moses, peace be upon him, to eat the roasted lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. A number of dietary restrictions, divine as well as man-made were imposed. Raw meat was not allowed to be consumed, neither was it allowed to be boiled in water. It had to be roasted:

They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled with water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts.'

(Exodus 12: 8-9)

Prohibition against eating raw meat is in consonance with what Noah was told about blood. There may have been contemporary people living around the Jewish people eating raw meat. It is a fair thing to ask people to eat roasted or cooked meat rather than raw. This would also be in consonance with medical point of view. The food value of meat would vary in case it was boiled, roasted, or fried. Telling people not to eat meat in water but to roast it may still have some reasons other than that of fat content. However, people would prefer to have the freedom of cooking it any way they liked once meat had been permitted to be eaten. Some of these restrictions had symbolic importance for the Jewish people. For example, eating the meat with bitter herbs would remind the Jewish people the bitter days they had spent under the Pharaoh.

Coming back to the sacrificial meat, it was strictly to be consumed before the morning.

And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.

(Exodus 12: 8-10)

This was good enough for people who had learnt neither to refrigerate nor to preserve meat for eating purposes. However, this kind of limitation would be hard to abide by when facilities of preserving meat would be available in future generations.

When to eat the leavened bread and when not to eat it?

During their three hundred and forty years of sojourn

in the land of Pharaohs, the Hebrews had learned from the Egyptians to use the leaven or the yeast to raise (ferment) the dough for their bread. Basically they enjoyed eating the leavened bread, but it reminded them of the hard days they had spent under the Pharaohs. Therefore during the Passover ceremonies, they wished to exclude the leaven and the leavened bread out of their lives, if not entirely, then at least for those seven days of the Passover – universalizing it as a symbol of evil and hardship in this world.

Basically both leavened and unleavened breads are permitted to be eaten. However, for the ceremonial purposes unleavened bread is to be eaten for the seven days of the Passover. Exemptions are strictly punished.

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the first day you shall put away leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel...

(Exodus 12: 15)

The Manner of eating the Passover food:

The manner of eating this Passover meal is described for the benefit of Israelites. Alluding to the haste with which they had to leave Egypt, it is a kind of exercise in character building suggesting that a nation like Israelites needs to be on its toes, ready for any eventualities. No one would like to take God's command lightly.

In this manner you shall eat it:

your loins girded,
your sandals on your feet,
and your staff in your hand;
And you shall eat it in haste...
(Exodus 12:11).

Who shall eat The Passover Food?

Exodus 12:43-51 gives further details about who shall be allowed to eat this Passover food and who shall not be allowed to eat of it. Foreigners, uncircumcised slaves, sojourners (travellers), hired servants will not be allowed to eat of the Passover meal. If slaves, sojourners, foreigners wish to partake of this meal, all their males will have to be circumcised first.

Who shall execute the offering (Slaughter)?

And, one has to be sure, that this offering is executed by Aaron and his sons who would be the priests. (Exodus 40:12-15). These additional details about whether the meat is to be stored, who is to slaughter it, and how it is to be eaten were, perhaps, added to the laws later on as they acquired symbolic significance. Apparently, it would be difficult to follow them. They sound unnatural and man-made. Such legal additions eventually would render the sacrifices meaningless drudgeries because of which people would eventually give up the ceremonies.

How Does Islam Perceive The Procedural Details

Imam Malik in his Al-Muwatta reports a number of

traditions which allow people to store up sacrificial meat after having eaten, given Sadaqa, and provided for themselves.

'Eat, give Sadaqa, provide for yourselves, and store up.'

In another Hadith the Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said:

"I forbade you before to eat meat of the sacrifice after three days, but now eat, give sadaqa, and store up. I forbade you before to make nabidh (by soaking raisins or dates in water), but now make nabidh, but remember every intoxicant is *haram*. I forbade you to visit graves, but now visit them, and do not use bad language."⁶

(Imam Malik ibn Anas *Al-Muwatta*).

Separating God's Command From Human Tradition: The Example Of Garlic In Islam

Such restrictions were meant to remind Jewish people of their historical and legendary predicaments. They were hardly meant to be laws of God.

- To give an example from Islamic ways of eating, we can say that garlic is basically lawful [*halal*] to eat according to the law of God. However, as it

⁶ Imam Malik ibn Anas *Al-Muwatta* Translated by Aisha Abdurrahman Bewley, Kegan Paul International, London & New York, Chapter 23 Sacrificial Animals, pp. 190-191.

has a strong pungent odour if eaten raw, the Messenger of Allah asked his followers not to eat raw garlic on Fridays before coming for the congregational prayers. Now, Muslims make a subtle differentiation between what is prohibited and what is a temporary advice from the Prophet (pbuh). The restriction about garlic is from the Prophet of Islam, not from Allah (SWT). The restriction has a limited purpose. It is meant for the convenience of other members of the congregation. This instruction or advice does not make garlic a prohibited commodity. Taking an extreme example, if we suppose that a Muslim eats raw garlic not remembering that it is a Friday. Later on, before it is prayer time, he remembers it is a Friday. Now where does he stand. If we were to apply the law to him as Jewish people applied to their people, he would be cut off from the Muslim community or mosque for ever. But for a Muslim, thank God, that is not the case. He is still within the community of Islam and he can still come for the prayers – because prayer with congregation takes precedence over garlic. The best he could do is to brush his teeth, wash and rinse his mouth, eat some other fragrant herbs so that the people in the congregation are not inconvenienced because of what he has eaten. Since the Prophet of God (pbuh) expressed his displeasure, and since it was for the sake of convenience to other members of the congregation, Muslims make it a point not to eat raw garlic before going to the mosque. But this does not make garlic unlawful or *haram*.

- According to the Islamic way, sacrificial meat can

be eaten by any one. The sojourners and foreigners and slaves shall be the first to think of when you offer food in the way of God. It would be immaterial whether the eater was circumcised (Muslim or Jewish) or not.

- Furthermore, any Muslim who can say 'Bismillah Allahu Akbar' is entitled to slaughter his own or somebody else's offering. A Muslim doesn't have to go looking for a son of Muhammad, peace be upon him, or that of Abu Bakr or Ali, for this purpose, may Allah be pleased with them all.
- According to Islam, what is prohibited to one is prohibited to all, and what is permitted to one is permitted to all. What is permitted to the priest to eat is permitted to any other man, woman (menstruating or clean), or child. No part of a permitted animal is prohibited in Islam and no part of the prohibited animal is permitted in Islam.

10. THE UNACCEPTABLE SACRIFICES DURING THE DAYS OF ISAIAH (AS)

There had always been some among the Israelites who were ever ready to accept evil ways of their neighbours. During the days of Moses (pbuh), they made a calf from the ornaments they had brought out from Egypt. They started worshipping it (*Exodus* 32:1-29, *Quran* 2:92). Later on at a number of times they would request Moses (pbuh) to allow them to have idols like other people had (*Quran* 7:138). In Isaiah's times there were people who 'provoked' God by sacrificing in gardens (rather than at the altar of God), and burning incense upon

botles, spending the night in secret places, and eating swine's flesh, and broth of abominable animals like mice, (*Old Testament, Isaiah: 65:5; 66:17.*) Because of these provocative actions of the Israelites, even their seemingly good deeds, looked like evil deeds:

- He who slaughters an ox is like him who kills a man;
- He who sacrifices a lamb is like him who breaks dog's neck;
- He who presents cereal offering is like him who offers swine's blood... (*Isaiah :66: 1-3*)

That is, their sacrifices were not acceptable to God.

11. PROPHET EZEKIEL (AS'S) FOUL FUEL DURING THE SEIGE OF JERUSALEM:

During the first siege of Jerusalem, Israelites had a very difficult time. They ate bread by measure and drank water by measure because of scarcity of food and water. What is worse, they were forced to bake their barley bread on human dung. And the Lord said:

Thus shall the people of Israel eat their bread unclean, among the nations whither I will drive them'.

(*Ezekiel* 4:9-13)

Prophet Ezekiel, peace be upon him, prayed to God for a respite telling Him:

Ah Lord God, behold, I have never defiled myself; from my youth up till now I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has foul flesh come into my mouth..

(*Ezekiel* 4:14)

God relented over Ezekiel's prayer, telling him:

See, I will let you have cow's dung instead of human dung, on which you may prepare your bread.

(*Ezekiel* 4:15)

However, the major punishment remained as the bread was to be eaten with a feeling of fearfulness and water was to be drunk with a feeling of dismay:

Moreover he said to me, "Son of man, behold I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem; they shall eat bread by weight and with fearfulness; and they shall drink water by measure and in dismay. I will do this that they may lack bread and water, and look at one another in dismay, and waste away under their punishment.

(*Ezekiel* 4:16)

In contrast to this plight of the people of Jerusalem before its first fall, we have the story of the Quraish of Makka at the time of the advent of Islam. When the Quraish were still persisting in their infidelity during the days of the Prophet (pbuh), Allah (SWT) reminded them of how He (SWT) had blessed them and their

city providing them against their hunger and protecting them against their fear:

Then let them worship the Lord of This House who has fed them (or provided them with food) against hunger, and with security (or has rendered them secure) against fear (of danger)

(*Quran, Quraish* 106:3-4)

The Wall of Law is not to be Trespassed

It is good to leave the wall of the Law intact in order to protect serenity and purity of a people's culture. The wall of Law is good for the vineyard; if the wall is broken down.

Why then hast thou broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it.'

(*The Psalms* 80:13).

Paul would later on destroy this wall of Law (as we shall see in Part 2 of this book.)

The Jewish people, from Moses down to the days of Jesus, including Jesus himself, his mother, and his followers were ruled by the definition of 'clean and unclean' animals as given by God through Moses in *Leviticus* Chapter 11 and *Deuteronomy* 14. Islamic law, coming from the same source, has almost the same limitations prescribed. (The exception of camel separates

Muslims from Jews and Christians, and the exception of swine separates Christians from Jews and Muslims.

12. DRINKING DURING THE DAYS OF THE PROPHETS

Moses Was Commanded To Warn The People Against Drinking

Moses, peace be upon him, was asked to warn his people against wine and strong drink (translated by some as beer):

Drink no wine, nor strong drink,
you nor your sons with you,
when you go into the tent of meeting,
lest you die;

It shall be a statute for ever
throughout your generations.

(Leviticus 10:9)

This kind of situation transpires when the ban is not total, and the priests and the members of the congregation are hardly aware of what they are doing in the house of God. This is one step short of the total ban. Islam also had such a commandment as a preparatory step towards the total ban. When people were found distorting the word of God due to intoxicants, they were warned against coming to the house of Lord drunk:

Oh you who believe, do not draw near to
prayer when you are drunken, till you know
that which you utter, nor when you are
polluted..

(An-Nisaa 4:43)

As we read through the *Old and the New Testaments*, we find that long before Islam put its foot down on the total prohibition of wine drinking, Prophets in the *Old Testament* would, off and on, stand strongly against the intoxicating drinks asking their followers not to indulge in this frivolity. Obviously, they were not making it up of their own accord. They must have been doing it under instructions from 'above'. In some cases, such Prophets succeeded in finding some followers who would stick to total prohibition. However, the attraction for this evil was so great the scribes, the copyists, and even some 'prophets' would refuse to acknowledge it as a command from God if the command was against drinking. Whenever clear commands in this regard were received from Almighty God, the people would pretend as if such directives or commands came from individuals themselves rather than God.

Re'chabites Are Blessed For Not Drinking

The case in point is the strange story of Prophet Jeremiah, peace be upon him, who was asked to go to the house of Re'chabites and ask them to come to the choicest place in the Temple to 'drink wine.' The purpose of the encounter that was to follow was to show Jeremiah, peace be upon him, the steadfastness and uprightness of those people who had accepted a command that obviously had divine source, promising to stop drinking wine for ever. The purpose was also to show Jeremiah how God was pleased with such people for their abstinence from such frivolities of this world. However, it is interesting to see how the scribe or the Prophet refused to see the importance of this encounter. The Prophet is reported to have called it a case of obedience

to their 'father's command' (as if it was not a command from God the father), suggesting that such abstinence might be good for Rechabites, but it was neither profitable to take up that issue with all others, nor was it a divine command.

God wanted Jeremiah, peace be upon him, to see how piety was related with abstinence from drinking wine, and how God was determined to bless those who abstained. Jeremiah (AS) is asked to go to the house of Re'chabites and to speak to them, inviting them to the house of the Lord, in an inner chamber, and offer them wine to drink. There is something in it for Jeremiah to learn, but, it seems, he refuses to learn. Jeremiah brought the entire house of Rechabites to the choicest chamber in the temple and set before them pitchers full of wine, and cups, and asked them to 'Drink Wine', but to his surprise, Rechabites refused to indulge themselves in this revelry. They are reported to have told Jeremiah, "We will drink no wine, for Jon'adab the son of Rechab, our father commanded us, 'You shall not drink wine, neither you nor your sons, for ever...' (There are a number of other things they are asked by Jon'adab not to do for 'that you may live many days in the land where you sojourn.'" (*Jeremiah* 35: 1-8)

Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Go and say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem,

"Will you not receive instructions and listen to my words?" says the Lord. The command which Jonadab the son of Rechab

gave to his sons, to drink no wine, has been kept; and they drink none to this day, for they have obeyed their command. I have spoken to you persistently, but you have not listened to me. Therefore..I am bringing on ..(them).. all the evil that I have pronounced against them; because I have spoken to them and they have not listened, I have called to them and they have not answered."

But to the house of the Rechabites, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,

"Because you have obeyed the command of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done all that he commanded, therefore...Jonadab the son of Rechab shall never lack a man to stand before me."

(*Jeremiah* 35:1-19)

People who 'stand before God' are pious, god-fearing, just, friends of God (Allah), who willingly obey all His commandments, and in Quran, Allah (SWT) says:

'And whoever stands before his Lord in piety (fear of God), there are two gardens for him (in the paradise.

(*Quran, Ar-Rahmaan*, 55:46)

How Nazarites Were Made To Drink Against The Law

People used to consecrate or live in seclusion serving

God; the institution was called Naziriteship, the person a Nazirite. Moses, peace be upon him, was told to tell his people the rules governing this institution:

And the Lord said to Moses, "Say to the people of Israel, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the Lord, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink, and shall not drink any juice of grapes, fresh or dried. All the days of his separation (i.e. Naziriteship) he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins.

(Numbers 6:1-4)

It took God such an effort to have the Nazarites abstain. The scribe wasted no time in nullifying what God had accomplished after such hard work. After the Nazarite has been shaved and the breast and thigh have been waved and offered, the scribe inserts half a sentence to say: 'and after that the Nazarite may drink wine.' (Numbers 6:20)

As a matter of fact once a Nazarite, a person has to be a Nazarite for ever. We have evidence that those who were sanctified as Nazarites were forbidden to drink wine all their lives 'from the birth to the day of his death' (Numbers: 13:7) as the following story of Samuel, the son of Elkanah and Hannah suggests. This Samuel is 'their prophet' who is reported in Quran (*Al-Baqarah* 2:246-247) to have appointed Saul (David's father-in-

law) as king to Bani Israel.

Elkanah's wife, Hannah had no children. She was deeply distressed and prayed for a son and promised to give him away 'to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.' (I Samuel:1:11). As she was praying in her heart, with her lips moving without making any sound, Eli took her to be a drunken woman and asked her to leave the temple. She said, 'No, my Lord... I have drunk nor wine nor strong drink, but I have been... pouring out of my heart anxiety and vexation.' God heard her prayer, giving her a son to be called Samuel who was left at the temple after his weaning: and She says '.. therefore I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord.'

(I Samuel 1:26-28)

Samson, the Drinking Nazarite

(What happens when People Try to Out-smart God?)

However, humans are humans; they always try to find ways to out-smart God. Here is the evidence:

There was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of Danites whose name was Mano'ah.. His wife who had been barren for a long time was at last told by the angel of the Lord that she would conceive and bear a son (to be known later on as Samson), and God said to

this woman:

... Therefore beware, and drink no wine or strong drink (i.e. beer), and eat nothing unclean...

(Judges 13:4-7; 13-14)

Samson, who was supposed to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines, eventually told Delilah of his secret that shaving his head with a razor will take away his strength. How Samson was persuaded into giving away his secret of strength would be unimaginable without the help of intoxicants.

This was to happen a number of times in the history of Israelites when Nazarites were persuaded into drinking wine. Prophet Amos is reported to have brought this message from God:

"And I raised up some of your sons as prophets, and some of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not indeed so, O people of Israel?" says the Lord. "But you made the Nazarites drink wine, and (you) commanded the prophets, saying, 'You shall not prophesy.' "Behold I will press you down in your place, as a cart full of sheaves presses down." (Amos 2:11-12)

PART 2

THE PROHIBITIONS ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

IN the first part of this book discussion was focussed on the Prohibited and the Permitted foods and drinks as laid down in the Old Testament, embracing initially Adam's stay in the Garden of Eden, eating of the fruit of the Forbidden Tree and the consequent relegation to new abode. Then it enunciated how Adam (AS) and his successors received divine commandments concerning Prohibited and Permitted foods and drinks, how some of them held firm to these commands and how, few of them faltered and succumbed to the gastric urges.

In this second part concept of Prohibited and Permitted food in accordance with the New Testament is discussed. The first section concentrates on the etiquettes of eating and drinking practised by Jesus (AS) and the type of animals that he abhorred. The second section discusses the divergent views about permissibility or prohibition of foods and drinks propounded by the followers of Jesus (AS) that led to schism between the three pillars of christianity and Paul.]

13. WHAT DID THE PEOPLE EAT DURING THE DAYS OF JESUS (AS)?

What did John The Baptist Eat?

ZAKARIYA (Zechariah), his son, John the Baptist, Jesus and Maryam all belonged to the priest family of the Jews – the Family of 'Imraan. They used to eat and drink according to the commandments.

In those days, John the Baptist, son of Zechariah, was preaching asking people to repent. John wore a garment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle around his waist; and his food was locusts and honey.

(*Matthew 3:1-4; Mark 1:3-8, Luke 3:2-17, John 1:6-8*).

What did Jesus (pbuh) eat?

The strangest statement one could make about Jesus Christ, peace be upon him, is that he was not a Christian. That is, he was not a follower of the religion that was later on attributed to him or propagated in his name. The following are some of the basic facts to remember.

- Jesus (peace be upon him) was born in a Jewish family. His mother Maryam (peace be upon her) and other relatives were staunch followers of their religion.
- Jesus (pbuh) was circumcised on the eighth day (Luke 2:21),
- He (pbuh) never ate any food forbidden by the

'Law', neither did he allow anybody else to consume anything forbidden.

So long as he was with his followers, they too kept the law.

He had proclaimed very clearly that he had not come to abrogate the law.

There were certain ritualistic 'customs' handed over by tradition, not prescribed by God or the Prophets, which he refused to insist on. For example, washing of hands.

Washing of Hands before eating

When Pharisees gathered around Jesus (pbuh), they asked him many puzzling questions. One persistent question reported by all the four gospels was about why he (Luke: 38) and his disciples did not wash their hands before eating, as required by the tradition of the elders. Jesus answered suggesting that people had made void the-word of God for the sake of their own traditions. The case in question was honouring the father and the mother. Jesus (pbuh) quotes from the *Book of Isaiah* (29:13) where God is reported to have said the people worshipped him with their lips only.. and that they taught the precepts of men to be doctrines of God.

"You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men."
(*Mark 7:4-8*)

Besides Mark (7:1-23), Matthew (15: 1-20) and

Luke (11:38-) also report this incident of not washing hands. As a matter of fact, washing of hands was one of those traditions or customs Jewish people came to have, like washing of cups and pots and vessels of bronze. When Jewish people came from the market place, they wouldn't eat unless they purified themselves. None of such practices had been ordained by God.

Washing Hands Before Eating: The Islamic Perspective

Although the Quran does not make it compulsory for Muslims to perform any kind of ritualistic cleaning before resorting to eating, there are numerous traditions of the holy prophet (pbuh) showing that the Prophet (pbuh) did wash his hands before eating. These traditions of the Prophet encourage Muslims to do the same. As an act of *Sunnah*, it is not only preferable to wash hands before eating, but a source of blessing. However, in no circumstances is it obligatory on Muslims. It is not an article of faith breaking of which would be considered breaking of the Shari'ah (law). One of the traditions says:

Salman reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, "The blessing of food [*barkata'aam*] is the washing of hands before it, and the washing of hands after it.

(Reported by Tirmizi in his *Mishkwaat*.)

However, if a Muslim finds another Muslim eating without having washed his hands, he can not reproach him, accuse him, condemn him, censure him, or shun

him. He can not say that his brother is guilty of breaking a commandment of God. Of course, in modern times we know about the presence of microbes and germs on dirty hands which makes it still more preferable for even the secular not to eat without washing hands. However, we can not say a person is not a Muslim if he did not wash his hands before eating. We cannot say such a person is going to be punished by God for breaking a covenant, because he has not broken any commands. Of course, we can say that he would be deprived of the blessings [*Barakah*] that is awarded in response to following the ways of Allah (SWT) and His Prophet (SAW). Besides, Muslims love to follow the Prophet's ways. So they consider it a great blessing to be able to do as he (pbuh) did, and a deprivation not to be able to follow the Prophet (pbuh). If we look at it from a secular point of view, following such traditions only helps us behave like civilized human beings. It may impress some people when doctors (dieticians and dentists) tell them that the most hygienic way to eat is to wash hands before and after eating – rinse the mouth and brush the teeth.

Other Considerations

Other traditions of the Prophet (SAW) suggest saying *Bismillah* before eating, eating with the right hand, eating from the nearest part of the dish, not blowing into the drinking vessel, rinsing of-mouth [*madh-madha*] before and after eating, covering food and drink while they are not being consumed, and saying a thanksgiving-prayer after eating is finished.

These are considered to be good etiquettes of eating

and drinking. A good Muslim would try to follow the ways of the Prophet, but none observation of any of these precepts does not render a person non-Muslim. If a person does not follow any of these precepts, he would not be committing any particular cardinal sin although he would be missing the blessings [*barakah*] that accompany the following of the tradition of the Prophet (pbuh).

Eating together or separately

According to Quranic injunction, there is no restriction on whether you eat separately or together (An-Nour 24:61). However, according to the tradition of the Prophet (SAW), it is preferable to eat together.

What defiles a man? What goes into him or what comes out of him?

In continuation to his answer to the question of why his disciples don't wash their hands, Jesus (pbuh) goes on to make a statement which, although apparently rather simplistic, the disciples find difficult to understand. The statement says:

‘...there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him.’

The disciples request Jesus (pbuh) to explain his parable. Explaining the parable to his disciples, Jesus (pbuh) says:

“... whatever goes into a man from outside

cannot defile him, since it enters, not his heart but his stomach, and so passes on (or is evacuated).” (Thus he declared all foods clean)

(Mark 7:19)

The author of the Gospel according to Mark, comments in parentheses (brackets) saying:

(Thus he declared all foods clean.)

The Christendom has based its case of *Halal* and *Haram* on this parenthetical comment of Mark, attributing to Jesus (pbuh) the permission to eat everything. Although Matthew and Luke also report the incident of washing hands, they do not use the occasion to declare all foods clean. Obviously these are not the words of Jesus (pbuh). They are merely words of the writer of the Gospel According to Mark.

Confusing the Words of Scribes with Words of God and the Words of Prophets!

Matthew reports Jesus (pbuh) to have said,

“Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.”

(Matthew 15:13)

In a rather subtle way, what Matthew reports Jesus (pbuh) to have said to be ‘rooted up’ applies to many of the sayings of the apostles and Paul which have come neither from God nor from Jesus (AS).

In Matthew 15:20, Jesus (AS) is reported to have

added, "... but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man." To complete the response of Jesus (A5), he is reported to have said:

What comes out of a man is what defiles a man.

The reason for this defilement is based on a rather philosophical point of view:

For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man."

(Mark 7:21-23)

Islam has a rather simple explanation of what Jesus (pbuh) meant when he used the expression: 'what enters and what comes out'. The food and drink that enters a Muslim has to be clean, pure, and permissible. However, as soon as this pure and clean and permissible food has entered human stomach, it is no more permissible to be consumed again. That is, as soon as it is ready to come out (evict) in any form it is *najas*, defiled. Thus faeces, urine, vomit, blood, sperm, and menses are *haram*. Eating or drinking of any of them is *haram*. Eviction of faeces, urine, vomit, or blood make it obligatory to clean and perform ablution [*wudhu*] before one offers one's prayers. Eviction of sperm or blood of Haidh and Nafas make it obligatory to have a body wash [*ghusul*] before performing prayers or reciting Quran. Sweat and saliva are *najas* to a lesser degree. They should not re-

enter human mouth or stomach (once they are out). However, they do not defile a person or his clothes as faeces, urine or blood would do. Neither do they make it obligatory to change clothes or perform ablution [*wudhu*] before saying prayer or reciting Quran.

With Whom To eat?

Israelites had some scruples about with whom to eat - not only tax collectors and sinners were taboos, but Pharisees and Samaritans and others would not eat when other people were around. They were all taboos as in our practical world we find a lot of people having taboos regarding eating with people from different racial, ethnic, or religious groups. Jesus (pbuh) did not follow this traditional principle either. He didn't mind eating with the people who appeared to be shunned for various prejudices:

And as he sat at table in the house, behold many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9: 10-13)¹

¹The same story is told in Mark 2:15-17, Luke 5:27-32 and Luke 15:1-2 with a few varied details.

The swine: One animal specifically named with abhorrence by Jesus:

One animal that is referred to in 'abominable' terms by Jesus (peace be upon him) is the pig:

"Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn to attack you."

(*Matthew 7:6*)

Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him, is reported in Quran to have spoken to his people in his childhood saying (among other things):

'And (I have come) confirming that which was before me of the Torah, and to make lawful some of that which was forbidden to you.

I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear Allah and obey me. Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path.'

(*Aal'Imraan 3:50-51*)

Muslim commentators say that Jesus (pbuh) clarified some of those confusions which, due to personal interpolations and distortions, had crept into the scriptures and traditions of Bani Israel. Such interpolations also included the permitted and the prohibited foods. Some say that Jesus (pbuh) clarified confusion regarding the flesh of camel, some fishes, the fat, and some birds

that the Jewish considered to be prohibited to them. Pig was, however, one animal he neither ate nor approved of to be eaten. As we shall see, pig-breeders and pig-eaters never had a very cordial relationship with Jesus, peace be upon him.

Jesus (pbuh) casts out devils sending them into swines

Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us the story of the demoniacs at the country of the Gera'senes (which was opposite Galilee) who challenged Jesus (pbuh), asking him to send them away into the herd of swine if he must cast them out. Being told to go (being given the permission-Mark), the demons came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd (numbering about two thousand) rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters.

The people who had been possessed by the demons, the Demoniacs, were at last free. When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled, and going into the city they told everything.. but the pig-owners came and asked (or begged or began to beg) Jesus, peace be upon him, to leave their neighbourhood (for having killed their beloved animals) as reported by Matthew, Mark, and Luke.² Putting the three versions together, we get the story to be something like this:

(When the herdsmen saw what had hap-

²The incident is reported in *The Gospel According To Matthew 8:28-34; The Gospel According To Mark 5:11-16; The Gospel According To Luke 8:32-34*).

pened, they) fled, and going into the city (and in the country) they told everything... and behold all the city came out to meet Jesus (.. and they were afraid...); and when they saw him they begged him (or they began to beg him) to leave (depart from) their neighbourhood.

(*Matthew* 8:33-34; *Mark* 5: 14-17;

Luke 8:34-37)

Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Ger'asenes asked him to depart them; for they were seized with great fear... Obviously, Jesus (pbuh) and pig-breeders could not live in peace in one territory.

14. PAUL ALLOWS EVERYTHING TO BE EATEN

Soon after the ascension or disappearance of Jesus, there arose a schism between the two main groups. Jewish followers of Jesus (pbuh) insisted on following the Law of Moses. The proponents of converts from gentiles did not want the non-Jewish converts to be scared away because of the rigours of the Law. Circumcision of the converts was the first issue; Laws about eating were soon to follow. Laws regarding sexual behaviour ('chastity') were still another bone of contention. (*Acts* 15:16.) Barnabas, Simon called Peter, and James (the three pillars) were present at this great meeting in Jerusalem. Paul persuaded the three pillars into granting certain sanctions for the Gentiles wishing to enter Christianity. James' ('the Lord's brother, as they called him) recommended to ask the gentile converts only to take care of four things from the Law of Moses. They did not insist on

circumcision at the outset. It was Paul himself who wrote a letter to the followers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia asking them to observe minimum of these four things, abstaining from

- (1) what has been sacrificed to idols and
- (2) blood,
- (3) what is strangled, and
- (4) unchastity."

The text of the letter is narrated in (*Acts*: 15:20-29)

'Since we have heard that some persons from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul... For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity. If you keep from these, you will do well. Farewell.'

(*Acts* 15:24-29)

Why did Paul Separate From 'The Three Pillars' of Christianity?

As long as Barnabas, James, Peter, and John were with him, Paul was still under some pressure to keep the

Law regarding eating habits. However, with the passage of time, Paul seems to have been carried away by his own erudition, and his own gospel. Paul and Barnabas left together on this holy journey (*Acts* 13-14). But they could not keep together for a long time. Paul used Barnabas, James, and Peter as long as he had not been established. Before long Paul and Barnabas separated (*Acts* 15:39). In his letter to Galatians, Paul is found criticising Peter, James, and Barnabas, calling them 'cowards' (in other translations, 'insincere').

Peter, pressurised by Paul into eating with Gentiles, retracts later on

Simon called Peter, one of the three pillars of the Christian faith, one of the highly respected 'apostles', was persuaded by Paul into eating with the gentiles, the uncircumcised, the food which was considered prohibited according to the Law. But Paul wished to push the point to the other extreme. The Jewish Christians criticised him for such a breach of law. Peter did not like it. Not being sure about what to do, Peter, perhaps, repented and retracted, as did most other Jewish Christians, including James, John and Barnabas. Peter did not want to continue following Paul's new gospel which taught everything contrary to the teachings of Jesus (pbuh). Paul got very upset. He 'condemned' Peter calling him 'insincere' or coward. Paul criticised the three of them bitterly. In his letter to Galatians, Paul says:

And from those .. who were reputed to be something (that is, Barnabas, James, and Peter) – what they were makes no difference to me... those, I say, who were of repute

added nothing to me; but on the contrary when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised... But when Cephas (Peter) came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James (that is, the 'brother' of Jesus, pbuh), he (that is, Peter) ate with the Gentiles; but when they (that is, men from James) came, he (that is, Peter) drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party (that is Jewish Christians the immediate followers and relatives of Jesus). And with him the rest of the Jews (that is Jewish followers of Jesus) acted insincerely, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?..."

(*Galatians* 2:6, 11-15)

Who was sincere to the gospel of Jesus Christ (pbuh) and who was insincere, and who was straightforward about the truth of the gospel and who was not, we shall leave to God to judge between Paul on one side and Peter, James, and Barnabas on the other, on the day of Judgement. Only then shall they know the truth regarding what they had been wrangling. All we can say now is that slowly and gradually, the followers of

Jesus (pbuh), James, Peter, and Barnabas disappeared into oblivion as Pauline Christianity took over.

Peter Defends his Eating 'Everything' with the Help of a Dream: and then retracts:

Peter defended his joining the gentiles, and then separated from them. With regard to joining the gentiles he defended himself:

I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, something descending, like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and came down to me. Looking at it closely I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.'

But I said, 'No, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has entered my mouth.'

But the voice answered a second time from heaven, 'What God has cleansed, you must not call common.' This happened three times...

(Acts: 11:2-10)

Simon Peter wrote to his brethren in Christianity warning them about false prophets, comparing those who had abandoned the way Peter thought was right with dogs and sows:

The dog turns back to his own vomit, and

the sow is washed only to wallow in the mire.

(2 Peter 2:22)

Like a gold ring in a swine's snout is a beautiful woman without discretion.

(Proverbs 11:22)

Ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood and from things strangled.

(Acts 5:29)

Paul's Argument About Abandoning the Law

It was not long before Paul succeeded in getting rid of the real apostles from his path. The three pillars receded somewhere in the oblivion. Paul found himself competent to reinterpret the whole episode of Jesus (pbuh). He claimed to have been appointed an Apostle of Jesus, and claimed to have his own gospel. Paul took from the episode of Jesus only the name of Jesus (pbuh) and his blood – abandoning all the teachings of the Master in the name of his 'belief'. He followed his own philosophy, reinterpreted the scriptures, and did exactly opposite of what Jesus did during his earthly sojourn. Paul preached exactly opposite of what Jesus (pbuh) stood for, and what he had preached. Paul incorporated his new way not only in food and drinks but in all other matters of rituals and beliefs. The catch-word Paul used for the propagation of his philosophy was the new 'belief' in Jesus Christ (pbuh) against the Law of Moses. If one believes, he said, one doesn't have to follow the law. Romans 14 brings the argument:

One who believes, he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables.

(*Romans*: 14:2)

This is based on Paul's assertion that belief renders one above the Law. He tried to persuade people into believing that as long as (from Adam to Jesus) people had no 'belief' in Jesus (pbuh) they were subjected to the laws (as a sort of punishment.) Now that they had belief, 'Law' did not apply to them any more. His letter to Romans showed how divergent his ideas were from the teachings of his master, Jesus (pbuh), in whose name he was preaching:

Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgement on him who eats; for God has welcomed him.

(*Romans* 14:3)

That is, God has 'welcomed' the gentile to enter Christianity and allowed them to eat whatever they want (or whatever they had been eating before they came to know about Christianity.) This is because Paul wants to keep all parties happy: Greeks, Romans, Jews, and the people of the new Church. The new religion will take shape according to the whims of its followers; it has nothing which people will be obliged to follow as followers except for the belief that Jesus was God and son of God, and he died for their sins, rendering them above all the laws that Jesus (AS) himself had to follow.

Who are you to pass judgement on the servant of another? It is before his own

Master that he stands or falls....

(*Romans* 14:4)

Master is Jesus (peace be upon him). According to Paul's new preaching, it will be Jesus (AS) who will judge his servants. Furthermore, according to him, Jesus (peace be upon him), as the Master of The Day of Judgement, will uphold those who consider him God.

.. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand.

(*Romans* 14:4)

In a rather subtle and entangled web of argument (that would sound self-deceptive to a non-Paulinian), Paul first calls the followers of the Law 'weak.' They are weak in faith, because they do not believe in Jesus (AS) the way Paul wants them to believe. And then Paul calls the Pig-eating Gentile as 'one who believes' (because he believes in Jesus the way Paul wants him to believe). From this point onwards, it becomes easy to justify the pig-eating gentile's actions and claim that it is upheld by his Master, Jesus (AS):

I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for any one Who thinks it unclean.

(*Romans* 14:14.)

To put it in plain Shakespearean English, nothing is good or bad, but thinking makes it so. Looking at the nature of the argument, we realize how misleading these words could be. Once a person allows himself to be led by this false notion of 'belief' standing against

the 'Law', he just finds it easier to stay on to that kind of 'belief' he has persuaded himself into believing in. It releases him of all restrictions attached to Law. Such a belief would always be easier to follow for those who prefer the easy way out rather than the hardships of the Law.

Paul recognises the seriousness of his interpretation, the harm it is likely to do to the cause of faith, and in a weak ambiguous way he suggests for his gentle 'believers' to restrict themselves for the sake of the 'weakness' of their brethren (the Jewish Christians) whose faith (in Jesus Christ) might be destroyed if gentiles insisted on not following the law of Moses. However, because of the ambiguity of the message, the abiding of the law stands condemned and the pork-eating heathen – turned – Christian stands vindicated. Once the flood-gate is open, the 'believers' find it hard to restrict themselves. This message deserves a careful reading between the lines in order to fathom out the magic behind the words:

If your brother is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love.

(Romans 14:15)

That is, you shouldn't hurt Jewish Christians by insisting on eating in front of them what is unlawful to them.

Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. So do not let your good be spoken of as evil.

(Romans 14:16)

That is, if the Jewish Christians found you eating unlawful food, they would revert to Judaism, abandoning Christianity. So, although your intentions are good because you believe everything to be clean, it might be considered ruinous by the follower of the Law, which will make him abandon Christianity. So avoid eating pork when Jewish Christians are around.

For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit...

That is, according to the way the Paulinian Christians perceive, the Kingdom of God does not depend upon laws on food, but upon piety and peace, etc. Paul does not show even a speck of suspicion that Jesus may not have agreed with him.

Do not for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for any one to make others fall by what he eats;

That is, the followers we are getting from gentiles into Christianity is a work of God. So don't destroy it by insisting on eating pork in front of Jewish Christians, as they will abandon us if we insist on our ways.

it is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that-makes your brother stumble...

In other words, although you are right in devouring pork, blood and dead animals, it would be better

not to eat them if you think your Jewish Christians are going to leave us..

Happy is he who has no reason to judge himself for what he approves. But he who has doubts is condemned, if he eats, because he does not act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

(*Romans 14: 15-23*)

In other words, addressing gentile Christians, pointing out eating Greeks and Romans, Paul says: You are well off for not judging others what they should eat and what they should not. It is only the Jewish Christian who is condemned for eating what he eats because his choice comes from the law, not from the kind of belief Paul's followers have!

To the three pillars of faith, the apostles of Jesus (Peter, James, and John), this kind of belief seemed a mockery of the Master's ways and teachings! Thus they eventually parted ways with Paul.

Food Offered To idols:

Food offered to idols was at first called even by Paul unlawful during his first years of association with the apostles of Jesus, Peter, James, and John. However, once Paul was firmly established as the leader of his followers from the gentiles, he turned around and left it to the people to make their own decision regarding what they would prefer to eat. Although he seemed to be leaving them to their own conveniences, in fact, he was directly and indirectly encouraging them to eat against the law. In the process,

he condemned Peter, Paul, and Barnabas for not supporting him (as we have already seen):

Now concerning food offered to idols.. we know that 'an idol has no real existence,' and that 'there is no god but one'. For although there might be so called gods in heaven or on earth.. yet for us there is one God. (Mark the words, and keep your count!) The Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ (that is one God and one Lord), through whom are all things and through whom we exist...

(*I Corinthians 8:1-6*)

The difference between 'from' and 'through' needs to be noticed here: it means, 'from God the Father,' through Jesus Christ, the son of God.

However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through hitherto being accustomed to idols, eat food as really offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off, if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

(*I Corinthians 8:1-10*)

Paul's main objective was to take the people away from the Law. Believe it or not, he fully succeeded in his objective. The next 4 verses which put a weak and

negative argument for abandoning prohibited food have barely been noticed by Christendom:

For if any one sees you ... at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? ... If food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall.

(*I Corinthians* 8:11-13)

Paul must have been confused by these strains from different directions. At times he didn't know what he was talking about. Trying to please all men in every thing, he asked his followers to 'be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.' (*I Corinthians* 11:1)

In one and the same speech, he would condemn food offered to idols and then turn around and say:

Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. For "the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

(*I Corinthians* 10:25-26)

What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that pagans sacrifice the offer to demons and not to God.

I do not want you to be partners with demons. You can not partake of the table of Lord and the table of the demons. Shall

we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

'All things are lawful,' but not all things are helpful. 'All things are lawful,' but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbour.

What would one think was the import of Paul's speech here? Is he going to say: We are not going to eat on the demon's table. We are going to sit on God's table, because God is great, and we are not greater than God? What is the meaning of his words? No, he is not going to say that. He is going to say exactly the opposite. Maybe God is great, but Paul's belief in Jesus was so great that the Father and the Son are both out. Greeks and Romans, the pork-eating 'converts' to Christianity would love to follow what Paul had to say the same day, in the same speech, only it is in the next sentence:

Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience.

(*I Corinthians* 10:19-25)

This kind of argument definitely suits those who would be looking for some loopholes for allowing themselves to continue eating what they had been eating before they heard about Jesus Christ (peace be upon him). Those who stopped to ask Paul for the inconsistency in his argument were conveniently thrown out of Christendom. Let us read what follows and see if we can follow the argument:

If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then out of consideration for the man who informed you, and for conscience's sake – I mean his conscience, not yours – do not eat it...'

(1 *Corinthians* 10)

This fulfills what we are taught by *Quran*: 'There is a party of them that dreads men as with the dread of Allah or with even greater dread..' (4:77)

For why should my liberty be determined by another man's scruples? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? .. Give no offence to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the Church of God, just as I try to please all men in everything I do...that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

(1 *Corinthians* 10:27-33; 11:1.)

A man of scruples and a man of conscience indeed! The only one who was eventually 'of Christ'? Paul! Whoever wants to please everyone will certainly be failing in his duty of pleasing God. This was the easier way to follow for those people who would wish to enjoy the best of both the worlds! If people could become Christians, being assured of the blood of Christ to save them in the hereafter, without giving up their pagan

ways in this one, why wouldn't they join the crowd!

Law is for the lawless (not for Paul & his followers):

Paul, educated in the best tradition of Greek philosophers who were famous for proving day to be night and night to be day, wrote a letter to Timothy, his true child in the faith, concerning 'the Law'. First of all, he condemns those who desire to be the teachers of law, and then goes on to say that the law was meant to be for the sinners, not for us.

Certain persons .. desiring to be the teachers of law.. (that is Jewish Christians like Peter, James, and Barnabas)... Now we know that the law is good, if any one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, immoral persons, sodomites, kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

(1 *Timothy* 1:7-11)

There we are, slowly but surely, reaching the end of the Law. These are wonderfully strong sentimental powerful words and in the best tradition of the Greek logicians.

First Premise: Law is for murderers.
 Second Premise: We are not murderers.
 Conclusion: It is therefore proved that the Law is not for us.

Poor law! It seems, law has no chance withstanding such logic. Apparently, no one can deny that law is for murderers of fathers and mothers etc. It would also be true in most of our cases that we are not murderers of our fathers, etc. So the law does not apply to us, that is, the law does not punish us for something that we haven't done! Superficially, it sounds like a wonderful argument to say that the law does not apply to us or that we are free of law all because of the fact that we are not murderers of our fathers. But there is a fallacy in the argument that we miss in the heat of the excitement of what would seem to us to be a fresh idea. Don't we get something in return for being law-abiding citizens? First of all, we are counted as good citizens. Every one in the government as well as private and public sectors respects us. Secondly, the law protects us against other people who could be potentially law-breakers. Thirdly, we and our children live in peace and harmony in the society under the protection of the law. All of these benefits are accrued because of our being law-abiding citizens. In such circumstances, we can not say that the law does not apply to us or that we are free of the law. Furthermore, it would be dangerous to teach people that because they are not murderers of their fathers, the law of the land does not apply to them. So long as we live in a particular country, the law of the land does apply to us. Similarly, it would be dangerous to teach people that because they believe in Jesus or Moses or Muhammad (peace be upon them

all), the law of God does not apply to them. So long as we are living in the universe of Allah (SWT), His law applies to us. If we were to resort to teaching our children fallacious idea that law does not apply to them, it would not be long before there would be neither law nor order in our social and religious polity. It would be equal to leading people to the wrong path. Once their minds are obscured by such arguments, the gullible can be led to wherever the new master desires to lead them.

Law is not meant to be the end result of something. End result of law is not punishing people who are murderers. Law is a criterion for behaviour 'sound doctrine as Paul himself would call it. Good people stay within the law. They do not commit murders. They do not commit sodomy or adultery, they do not kidnap. The executioners of law shall not touch them. They are a sort of model for moral behaviour, a standard, a measure, a gauge, a criterion. The lawgiver would say, "These people are an example, a pattern for you. If you behave like these people, no one is going to take you to court, no one is going to bother you. Whoever transcends this, he breaks the harmony, the balance in the society. The Law has to come into motion." This world is full of human beings. Some of them are law-abiding people. Others defy the law. Those who abide by the law can not say, "The law doesn't apply to us." Of course, in a society, the law applies to each and every individual. No one is above the law no one is out of the sphere of law. If there is no Law to stop evil behaviour, the world will end up in chaos. Didn't Jesus say he had not come to destroy the law? Didn't Jesus say:

Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law-until all is accomplished.

Mark the words now. Who do you think the following words apply to? Does this apply to Peter, James, and Barnabas who 'desired to be the teachers of law' on Paul himself who considered himself dead to the law?

Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

(*Matthew 5:17-20*)

But Paul makes up a strong story that convinces him he has been released of the Law, and he enjoys the self-invented fact that he has been released of the law. He gives the example of a woman whose husband has died, releasing her thereby from the wedding vows she had with her husband – being free to live with a new husband:

Likewise, my brethren you have died to the law through the body of Christ... While we

were living in the flesh (the law applied to us)... but now we are discharged from the law, (because we) died to that which held us captive.. There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death...

(*Romans 7:1-6; 8:1-2.*)

For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle.. I desire then that... Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.... who forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

(*1 Timothy 4:3-5*)

However, this entire hard work was undertaken to permit people eating only one extra thing that Greeks and Romans were used to eating but Jewish and Semitic did not eat: the pig. Although the dictum that 'Every thing created by God is good' is still true, no one in the European Christendom has been seen eating cats, dogs, and mice (except, perhaps, Chinese Christians.)

15. THE THREE PILLARS OF CHRISTIANITY REACT...

The Letter of John censuring Paul

We find John speaking against these teachings of immorality which allow people to eat food sacrificed for idols. In 'The First Letter of John' he has a lesson for us to learn after Paul's misleading discourse. He is talking about Paul and others of his kind who were trying to woo gentiles by allowing them to eat the prohibited food:

He who says: "I know him" (that is, Jesus, pbuh), but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps his word (i.e. God's Law as given by Moses and as preached and practiced by Jesus, pbuh) in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him (that is, in Jesus): he who says he abides in him (that is, in Jesus) ought to walk in the same way in which he (that is Jesus) walked. (That is do what he did, eat what he ate, and say what he said.)

(*The First Letter of John 2:4-6*)

John comes out strong enough suggesting that a person who calls himself a follower of Jesus (AS) must do as the Master himself did. He says that a person who neglects the ways of Jesus (as brought by Moses) is not with Jesus (pbuh). Such a statement would sound fair enough to any liberal minded person! If that is not fair, what is? What else should a person say or do before

we take him seriously? John says one who doesn't follow Jesus in the Law is a liar when he says he is with Jesus. We have to find out the false prophets (the liars) who are misleading us. If we are happy to follow the false prophets, we can not blame John for not warning-us!

The Revelation To John

The scholars of *New Testament* consider the *Revelation to John* to have been composed by a number of unknown authors who lived during the last quarter of the first century. Many of such scholars also believe that some portions of this book deal with a contemporary crisis of faith. There are persistent allusions to false teachers who had been claiming to be following the master, but were not really following him. There are definite references to distortions in the laws of food. As we shall see some of the references in his letters to the angels of seven churches ask the disciples to stay steadfast. However, John and all his friends who were preaching the importance of Law could not fill the breach Paul and his followers had succeeded in making. John's voice is rather feeble as compared to Paul's, it is hardly audible. John in the *Revelation To John*, imagines writing letters to the seven churches on behalf of Jesus, peace be upon him.

In a rather obscure symbolic language these seven letters are addressed to the seven 'angels' (that is worldly keepers of the seven churches). They are written in such a way that the readers would think they were being addressed by Jesus Christ from the heavens above. Jesus christ in these letters to his angels warns them against the new teachings of the false prophets and asks them

to stay steadfast and wait for his (second) coming. These letters speak against some strange teachings which had been teaching immorality and allowing to eat food sacrificed to idols. He tells these angels who have not yet soiled their garments to remain steadfast and wait for Jesus's second coming.

"But I have a few things against you," he imagines writing to the angel of the Church of Pergamum on behalf of Jesus), "you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice immorality."

(Revelation 2:14-16)

Balaam son of Beor's blessings were acceptable to God. The King of Moab persuaded (Balaam Baa'oorah), against God's command, to curse Moses and his people. (Numbers 22:1-40) Quran refers to this person (ALA'ran) 7:176). Here, somebody during John's days is working as Balaam, bringing curse on God's own people because of some strange teachings – referred to as the teachings of the Nicolaitans which allow people to eat what has been sacrificed to idols. Who taught people to eat whatever gentiles ate, telling them they could eat anything because they 'believed', because their belief broke the bond of the Law? Pray, who was that person? None other than Paul.

Poor John, he had to speak in puzzles because of the terror Paul's followers had created after his 'conversion'. Writing to the angel of the Church in Thyatira

on behalf of Jesus, John says:

..But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and beguiling my servants to practice immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.. and I will give to each of you as your works deserve. But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching (of allowing immorality and allowing food sacrificed to idols), who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay upon you any other burden; only hold fast what you have, until I come. (Referring to the second coming of Jesus).

(Revelation 2:18-25)

Writing to 'the angel of the church in Sardis' he says:

'yet you have a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white..

(Revelation 3:1-6)

Writing To The angel of the church in Philadelphia he writes:

I know you have but little power, and yet you have kept my name. Behold I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie... I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have so

that no one may seize your crown...

(*Revelation 3:7-12*)

Jesus and the followers whom Jesus will refuse to own:

We have it on the authority of Apostles Matthew and Luke that on the day of judgement there would be many people who call Jesus, peace be upon him, 'Lord, Lord', in this world, but they shall not enter the kingdom of heaven, because they did not do in this world what he (peace be upon him) had told them to do.

"Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven (shall enter the kingdom of heaven.)"

On the day of Judgement many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord,' did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and did many mighty works in your name?"

Jesus (AS) shall refuse to own such people as his followers!

'And then I will declare to them: 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.'

(*Matthew 7:21-23*)

Again, Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) is reported to have said:

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not

do what I tell you? Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been wellbuilt (or founded upon the rock.) But he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

(*Luke 6:46-49*)

Remember The Day when Jesus will say: 'I do not know where you come from'

Luke gives us a touching episode of how Jesus (pbuh) tells his followers about the people who would be refused entry in the presence of the Lord, in the presence of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because Jesus would not know where they came from (that is, their ways were not the ways approved by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, or Jesus (peace be upon them all.)

He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?"

And he said to them,

"Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will

not be able. When once the householder has risen up and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us.'

He will answer you, "I do not know where you come from."

Then you will begin to say, "We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets."

But he will say, "I tell you, I do not know where you come from; depart from me, all you workers of evil, iniquity!"

There you will weep and gnash your teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out. And men will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

(*Luke 13:23-30*)

16. DRINKING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

What did John the Baptist (pbuh) drink?

As Zechariah (pbuh) received the glad tidings of a son at an old age, he was told by the angel that his prayer had been heard, and that his wife Elizabeth would bear him a son, and he was to call his name John [Yahya

or Yuhna]. Luke tells us that the angel told Zechariah that John would drink no wine nor any strong drink (as he was a Nazarite). (*Luke 1:1-15*)

Confusion Regarding Nazarites

There is a deliberate confusion regarding the meaning of the word 'Nazarine' during the days of Zecharia, the father of John the Baptist. Some would suggest that the people who were called Nazarines were inhabitants of Nazareth (*Matthew 2:19-23*). However, the evidence suggests that they were the people who according to their old tradition of Jews sanctified themselves for the cause of the service of God and His Temple. From various sources we learn that Hannah's daughter Maryam (Mary) was a Nazarite as were John the Baptist and Jesus, peace be upon them all. Zechariah's prayer was heard and his wife Elizabeth was to bear a son who was to be called John (Yuhna or Yahya).

For he will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

(*Luke 1:5-16*)

Three incidents stand out in the life of Jesus (peace be upon him) in the wine context: His turning water into wine for the marriage gathering when he was still young, raising the cup during the last supper, and the liquid that he drank when they were taking him to be crucified.

Gospel According to John (2:1-10) refers to 'the first

miracle' of Jesus. There was a marriage at Cana in Galilee. When the wine gave out, 'the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come?" The servants filled up the six stone jars with water (each holding about twenty to thirty gallons). When this 'drink' was taken to the steward of the feast, he was simply amazed that the hosts had kept the best wine until then, knowing that every man serves the best wine first. The concluding verse number 11 says, "This, the first of the signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him."

Popular scholars like Ahmad Deedat would say, "What a miracle with which to start the mission of prophethood!" The cynics wonder if it is due to this miracle that Christendom has the highest rate of drinking problems. Besides, John is the only one to report this incident; the other three gospels missed the first miracle. They had not heard of such an incident.

What did Jesus Drink At The Last Supper

On the first day of unleavened bread (Passover) preparations were made at a disciples house, 'a large upper room furnished and ready. The twelve disciples were having supper with Jesus:

And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given he gave it to them, and they all drank of

it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the (new) covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

(Mark 14:22-25)

Matthew 26:26-29 and Luke 22:17-19 report this incident in more or less same or similar words; Luke reports the cup to be taken before the bread. Without referring to the bread and cup, John has reported Jesus' washing disciples' feet and wiping them with a towel, and telling them other beautiful things. The texts do not say specifically what kind of drink was in the cup. If we know that Jesus was a Nazareth as was his mother and he was prohibited by the law to drink wine, we would expect the drink to be one that he was allowed to drink, not wine.

What did Jesus drink from the sponge

Matthew 27:33-34) says:

"And when they came to a place called Golgotha ... they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it."

Later on, when he was on the cross and had uttered the famous words about God forsaking him Eli, Eli, Lema safaghtani. One of the bystanders 'ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink..." (Matthew 27:45-47).

Mark 15:23 reports that they offered him wine mingled with myrrh; but he did not take it. Mark 15:36 reports the incident saying that the bystander put the reed on a stick and offered it to Jesus. Luke (23:36) says soldiers also mocked him and offered him vinegar. John reports the last will and the last words:

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfil the scripture (i.e. Psalm 69:21)), "I thirst." A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.
(John 19: 28-30)

It would be fair to conclude from the evidence provided by the Gospels that Jesus (peace be upon him) did not drink the stuff when he knew it was wine. On the other hand he did not resist lasting the vinegar. This was to fulfil the scriptures, as pointed out by John. Psalm 69. 21.

PART 3

PROHIBITIONS OF FOODS & DRINKS ACCORDING TO ISLAM

IN the first two parts of this book, we discussed the prohibited and the lawful foods and drinks from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures' (*The Old Testament and the New Testament*) perspectives. In this third part (in five sections), first of all, we shall look at the concept that everything has been created for mankind, next, we will look into the words that have been used for the concept of *Halal* and *Haram* to see what they mean to Muslims. Later on, briefly though, we will review the question of *Halal* and *Haram* from the perspective of Judeo-Christian-Islamic religious traditions as stated in the Quran. We shall, then, concentrate on the physical and moral aspects of Prohibited and the Lawful foods, and, finally, deliberate upon how intoxicants came to be prohibited in Islam.]

17. GOD'S CREATION IS PURE & CLEAN

Is man clean enough to be eaten by other human beings?

First of all, we will go back to the question raised by Paul that everything God has created must be clean to eat. We accept the premise that God is pure and therefore whatever He has created must be pure or *Tayyeb*. We accept the statement as it has come to us, but we take liberty to add a little corollary: everything that is on the surface of the earth has been created for the benefit of other creatures, including man. Eating is only one of the benefits of the things that He has created. There are other uses of such things even if they are not used for eating. Moreover, it is not in the nature of things that all things can be eaten by all other creatures. Having recognized that everything that has been created is definitely *tayyeb* for one or the other creature to eat, we also recognize that not all things *Tayyeb* enough to be edible or consumable for all creatures. Especially, there are so many creatures which are not consumable by human beings, although there are still other creatures which savour, relish, and enjoy eating them. Standards and criteria of cleanliness for every species are different. We will take the example of Man. There is no creature on the surface of this earth, above it or inside it, who considers itself as pure [*zaki*] as man thinks of himself. Allah (SWT) says:

‘Have you not seen those who would consider themselves pure..
[*yuzakkoona anfu sabum*]

(*An-Nisaa* 4:49)

Of course, it is not right for man to magnify himself in any way:

‘Therefore hold not yourself purified...’
[*fa-laa tuzzakku anfusakum*]
(*An-Najm* 53:32).

However, whatever a man may think of himself, he is not clean enough to be eaten by other human beings. Of course, he is *Tayyeb* enough to be eaten by certain worms, maggots, wolves, dogs, and cannibals (who have received no religious enlightenment). They would relish eating his meat. Therefore, for those who have received revelation, there have been certain restrictions regarding what is *Halal* and *Tayyeb* for them and what is not. Prophets Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (Peace be upon them all) clearly kept such restrictions. Their followers likewise are expected to keep the commandments of Allah (SWT) who has clearly stated what is *Halal* and what is *Haram*.

Whatever is on the earth has been created for the use of Mankind:

It is He (Allah SWT) Who has created for you all things that are on earth...
(*Al-Baqarah* 2:29)

For the rational beings, the people of intellect, *you* here refers to mankind in general, but for the people of love (*‘Isbiq*), however, the *you* here refers to Muhammad (SAW). The argument they provide is that the best of mankind are the prophets, so the *you* applies to them, in particular; and since the best of the prophets is

Muhammad (SAW), so the *you* applies to him, in particular.

And He has subjected to you, all from Himself, whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth...

(*Al-Jathiya* 45:13)

Do you not see that Allah has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and He has showered upon you His bounties in exceeding measures, both apparent and unseen, yet there are among men who dispute about Allah, without Knowledge and without Guidance, and without a luminous (enlightening) Book (to enlighten them.)

(*Lugmaan* 31:20)

Provisions of Allah (SWT) are a Blessing for Mankind

Whatever Allah (SWT) has provided for mankind in this world is a blessing for which we need to be thankful to Him.

The gardens full of fruits and vegetables

And He is the One Who produces gardens, arranged on supports, trellis [*ma'rooshatin*], and without trellis; and the date-palm, and crops of diverse tastes and flavours, and the olive,

and the pomegranate, like and unlike (in taste and texture, saying to them):

“Eat you of the fruit of it when it fruits; and pay its due (to the deserving people) upon the harvest day; and be not extravagant; Indeed Allah does not love the extravagant.”

(*Al-An'aam* 6:142)

The Cattle and the Beasts of Burden

Out of His Compassion and Mercy, Allah (SWT) has provided cattle for mankind. Count the benefits you get out of them. The Cattle for food, for riding, and a sign:

And the cattle! He has created them – for you.

- In them there is warmth (from their wool, hair, skins, milk, butter)
- and other profits (by breeding and buying and selling them)
- and of them you eat (meat, milk).
- And for you there is a [*jamaalun*] beauty attraction in them as you drive them (home) in the evening [*beena tureehoon*];
- or as you drive them out to the pasture in the morning [*beena tusrihoon*].
- And they bear your loads to (far off) places which you could not reach except with hardship. Indeed your Lord is [*Ra'of Raheem*] Kind (Compassionate), Merciful. (*An-Nahl* 16:5-7)

The Beasts of Burden for Riding and Adornment

And He has created horses and mules and asses
 • that you may ride them (that is, not eat them);
 • and as an adornment;
 • and He has created (many other creatures) that you do not know.
 And upon Allah is the direction of the way;
 and of the ways are many crooked;
 And if He had willed He would have guided you all. (*An-Nahl* 16:8-9)

There are many other benefits in the Cattle:

Allah it is Who has made cattle (available, subdued) for you so that

- you may ride on some of them,
- and of others you may eat.
- And for you there are other benefits in them,
- and that you may attain through them any desire that is in your breasts;
- and upon them and upon ships you are borne
- And He shows you His signs in every act of His creation, which ones, then, of the signs of Allah will you deny? (*Al-Moemin* 40:79-81)

How Allah Expresses His Compassion For Mankind

As the mother loves her child, she prepares or makes something with her own hands to give it to the child to use. Similarly, the Compassionate [Ar-Raheem] Allah

(SWT) makes things 'with His own hands' for the use of His creatures: they ride some of them (horses, mules, asses, camels, etc.) and eat of some of them (camel, buffalo, cow, sheep, goat, etc.)

Do they not see that We have created for them of what Our own hands have created, cattle, so that they are their owners. And We have subdued them (the cattle) for them so that they ride some of them and they feed on some of them. And from them they get other benefits and drinks! Will they not then express their thanks?

(*Yaseen* 36:71-73)

Milk – A sign for mankind

If we look at the process of milk formation in animals, we are surprised to see that of the three various by-products of the process two – blood and refuse (urine and faeces) – are *khabeeth* and *haram*, but milk, the substance in between, is *tayyeb*, tasty [*lazeez*], and *halal*.

And indeed in the cattle there is a sign for you. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies from between refuse and the blood (both unclean and prohibited), pure milk palatable (and lawful) to the drinkers.

(*An-Nahl* 16:66)

Fruits: A Source of Food

And from the fruit of the date palm and

the vine, you get out wholesome drink and food, behold in this is also a sign for those who are wise.

(*An-Nahl* 16:67)

Honey – A Source of Healing for Mankind

And your Lord taught the bee to build its hive in hills, on trees, and in (men's) habitations; Then to eat of all the produce and find with skill the spacious paths of its Lord: there issues from within their bodies a drink of varying colours, in which is a healing, *Shafaa* (cure) for mankind.

(*An-Nahl* 16:69)

18. WORDS, WORDS, ... AND WORDS, WHAT DO THEY REALLY MEAN?

Speaking for Muslims only, we can say that for Muslims, Allah (SWT) has clearly stated what is *Halal* and He has also clearly stated what is *Haram*. The basic principle of foods and drinks in Islamic Shari'ah is that all pure and wholesome things [*tayyebaat*] are lawful [*halal*] and all things *khabeeth*, *Najis* or *rijs* are prohibited [*haram*].

Arabic speaking Muslims understand these five words as they are. For the Muslims of the South Asian sub-continent (Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, and even Iran) the best words to express the concept of *Tayyeb* is *Paak*, and the opposite of it, expressed in the three words [*Khabeeth*, *Najis*, *rijs*], is *Paleed* or *Naa-Paak*. These words have become a part of the psychic culture of the

speakers of those languages who know what the words mean to them. However, Muslims living in English speaking world or those reading the Islamic scriptures to English translations have a bit of a problem. As the English language has matured during the last one thousand years, it has grown under a strong influence of Christian cultural ethos which have not seen the concepts of purity and impurity or the Prohibited and the lawful, as Jewish and Muslim traditions have seen them in their original environments. Muslims therefore find it difficult to comprehend and grasp in English what the words *Halal* and *Haram*, *Tayyeb*, and *Khabeeth*, *Rijs* and *Najis*, etc. would mean to them in the English language. Therefore, before we go into the details of the Prohibited and the Permitted Foods and Drinks in Islam, we will look into the dictionary meanings of the five words and see how Quran has used them.¹

Halal is from [*halla*], loosening a knot, lawful, free, that which is allowed, permitted, or permissible, legal, licit, legitimate. Originally *Hallun* means to untie a knot, as Moses (AS) prayed to his Lord to untie the knot of his tongue (*Taha* 20:27). *Halaltu* was used to express the idea of untying knots of the luggage to stop on a journey. The Quranic expression [*wa aballu qawmahum darul bawaar*] meant that they caused their people to alight in the house of perdition or hell (*Ibrahim* 14:28). When a pilgrim untied his Ahraam, he was said to have

1. Hans Wehr: *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic – Arabic English*, edited by J. Milton Cowan, Beirut, London, 3rd edition, 1974. 2. J.G. Hava, *Al-Faraid, Arabic-English Dictionary*, 4th edition, Beirut, 1970. 3. Imam Raghīb Isfahani (died 502 AH) *Al-Mufridaat Ghareebil Quran*.

become *halal*. Allah (SWT) says, "when you take off the Ahraam, [*wa idha halalturn*], you can hunt [*Taadoo*]." (*Al-Maedah* 5:2). Although *Halul-uqda* means untying (that is, solving) a (problematic) knot, the expression metaphorically refers to slaughtering of an animal when the knot of its neck (glottis), so to say, is untied, and it becomes permissible to eat. So by extension the expression *halal* refers to anything that is declared permissible for believers to eat. Still, by further extension of the meaning, anything that is permissible for a believer to use is *Halal* for him. So Allah (SWT) says we have made your wives *halal* for you [*inna ahlalna laka azwajaka ...*] (*Al-Ahzaab* 33:50). The husband is called *Haleel* and the wife *Haleela*, perhaps, because each one of them opens up his or her knot for the other, or perhaps because each one has been declared *Halal* for the other, or perhaps because they live together under one roof – so, by still further extension of the meaning of this expression, those who live together under one roof are *Haleels* to one another.

Now the word *Halal* is used with two levels of meanings. It applies not only to what is permitted by Allah (SWT) to be eaten (and not prohibited by Him), but earned or acquired lawfully or by lawful means. So meat of cow (beef), chicken, vegetables, or corn are all, in a way, apparently, *Halal* for Muslims, but it is not *Halal* if it is stolen or bought with ill-earned money. But what was *Halal* (permitted by Allah and was bought or acquired by lawful means), may still be [*ghair tayyeb*], impure, in the sense that it has gone stale or is not hygienic for one or the other reason. So in order for a thing to be consumed properly, it has to be both *Halal* and *Tayyeb*.

Tayyeb is good, agreeable, palatable, pleasant, pleasing, delightful, delicious, sweet, embalmed, perfumed, soothing to one's mind – opposite of stale, moldy, musty, rotten, and unhygienic. Imam Raghīb Isfahānī says a thing that delights the beholder's spirit is *Tayyeb*, which means something that fascinates human senses (of sight, taste, smell) and intellect, as well as soul is *Tayyeb*. From the Islamic Shari'ah's point of view, *At-Ta'aam Tayyeb* is one that is acquired by legitimate and lawful means from legitimate place, and according to lawful portion, since the food that is acquired in such a way would be delightful in this world as well as in the hereafter. If such food does not meet this condition (of its being acceptable in the other world), the seemingly pleasant things of this world would be unpleasant and repugnant in the hereafter. That is why Quran commands us to eat of the pure, delightful, *Tayyeb* things of this world. That is the mission of the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW), as referring to him Allah (SWT) says,

"... he allows to be lawful for them things (that are) clean [*yuhillu lahum-ut-tayyebaat*] and forbids for them things unclean [*yuharrimu 'alabimul khabaa'ith*]..."
(*Al-A'raaf* 7:157/158).

According to the people of *Haqiqah* (esoteric reality), every trade or commerce or business that is carried without remembering the name of Allah (SWT), the Ultimate Reality or Haq for the mystics, is *Khabeeth*. On the contrary, every transaction that begins with the name of Allah (SWT), expresses the Witness [*Shuhood*] of Reality in the middle, and ends with the expression

of the praise and gratitude for Allah (SWT), is *Tayyeb*. Moreover, for a believer, it is not only Food that has to be *Tayyeb*, his entire life has to be encompassed by *Tayyebat*.

The spouses have to be *tayyeb*, for one another, which they will be if they are legally or lawfully married (*An-Nisaa* 4:3, *An-Noor* 10 24:26), they would be *Khabeeth* if they are adulterers and fornicators – and in God's book each one is for its own kind, the *Khabeeth* women for the *Khabeeth* men and the *Tayyeb* women for the *Tayyeb* men (*An-Noor* 24:26).

Human beings are also *Tayyeb* or *Khabeeth* depending upon whether they are believers or non-believers and whether they are willing to obey the orders of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (AS) or not. (*Aal Imraan* 3:179, *Al-Anfaal* 8:37)

Good deeds are *tayyebaat* and evil deeds are *Khabeethat* and they are compared with good tree and evil tree. (*Ibraheem* 14:26)

The progeny can be *tayyeb* – prophets like Zakariya have prayed for. (*Aal-Imraan* 3:38)

Living places would be [*masakina tayyebah*] for the believers. (*Ar-Tawbah* 9:72)

Land would be *Tayyeb* or *Khabeeth* depending upon whether it is fertile or infertile. (*Al-A'raaf* 7:58)

The wind would be *Tayyeb* for the ships to sail on the surface of the oceans. (*Yunus* 10:22).

What was given to Bani Israel as *manna wa Salwah* was of the *Tayyebaat* (*Al-Baqarah* 2:57, *Al-A'raaf* 7:160), but as punishment for their disobedience they were prohibited some of the *Tayyebaat* which had been, earlier, permitted to them (*An-Nisa* 4:160).

Scholars tell us that the wealth from which has been taken out the portion of God – Zakah – is *Tayyeb* and *Zakky*, and the wealth from which has been taken out no portion for the sake of God is *Khabeeth*.

The wealth and property that is acquired by unlawful means like bribery, robbery, deceit, improper balancing and measuring, etc. is also *Khabeeth*.

Khabeeth is malignant, harmful, dross, scum, bad, vicious, abominable, impure, wicked, mischievous. Imam Raghīb Isfahani defines the *Khabeeth* as any living or non-living thing (be it related with ideas or beliefs) that by the virtue of its being useless and worthless, is discarded, or looks ugly or dirty. The Arabic couplet that Imam Raghīb quotes compares a worthless person with *khaththal-hadeed*, like rust, the scum of iron, whom the poet had mistaken for pure silver. The word [*khabeeth*] encompasses all the evil and false beliefs and actions.

The activities of the Sodomists during the days of Prophet Lut (AS) have been referred to in Quran as [*khabaith*] (*Al-Anbiya* 21:74).

The process of discriminating believing, obedient, and pure persons from disbelieving, disobedient, and impure persons is referred to as [*hatta yameezal khabeeth minat-tayyeb*] (*Aal-Imraan* 3:179)

Khabeeth and *Tayyeb* can not be equal in rank or status even though one may see enormity of *khabeeth* (*Al-Maedab* 5:100)

Khabeeth women are for *Khabeeth* men, and *Khabeeth* men are for *Khabeeth* women. (*Surah An-Nuur* 24:26). One of the traditions of the Prophet (SAW) says, "*Moemin* (believer) is *Atyabu* (most pure) by his actions and a *kaafir* (disbeliever) is *Akbbathu* (most impure) by his actions.

Rijis is dirt, filth, atrocity, something that is shameful, disgraceful. *Rajis* is filthy, foul, shameful, dirty. Imam Raghib Isfahani says *Rijis* is that which is impure and dirty. According to him, *Rijis* is of four kinds:

Something could be *rijis* only according to physical characteristics or nature (appearance),

according to intelligence,

according to the Shari'ah (religious Islamic law),

or according to all of the above three.

For example, a dead body, carrion, is detestable by physical sight, it is also detestable from the point of view of intelligence, and from the point of view of *Shari'ah*. Similar to carrion are flowing blood, flesh of swine, and food over which has been taken the name of a deity other than God – they are all *rijis*, foul or an abomination (*Al-An'aam* 6:145) as Allah (SWT) informs us.

Drinking intoxicants is *rijis* from the point of view of Islamic *Shari'ah*, as it has been declared *rijis* by Allah (SWT) (*Al-Maedab* 5:90), but Imam Raghib Isfahani says intoxicants are *rijis* from the intelligence's point of view also – as wisdom dictates that a thing whose disadvantages and harms outweigh its benefits must be detested.

In the same vein, *Kuffaars* and *Mushrikeen* (disbelievers and associators) have been called *rijis* (*At-Tawbah* 9:28), as association and disbelief are the worst kind of intellectual filth and atrocity, which no sane mind would be willing to accept.

Quran tells us that this *rijis* gets hold of only those people who lack wisdom (*Tunus* 10:100). What such people have in their hearts is the sickness of *rijis*, which Allah (SWT) says He only increases *rijis* upon *rijis* (*At-Tawbah* 9:125).

Najis is impure, unclean, soiled, dirty, sullied, stained, tainted, polluted, contaminated, defiled, squalid, filthy. *Najis*, according to Imam Raghib Isfahani, is impurity, sensuous *najasat* and semantic *najasat*. Associators are dirty or filthy (not only physically, but spiritually as well) [*innamal Mushrikoona najas*], so let them not approach the Masjidil Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah) after this their year (*At-Tawbah* 9:28).

Allamah Yusuf Al-Qaradwi of Al-Azhar² has defined *Al-Halal*, *Al-Haram*, and *Al-Makruh* in the fol-

²Yusuf Al-Qaradwi, *The Lawful and The Prohibited in Islam*, Islamic Book Trust, KL, 1994, p. 10.

lowing words:

Al-Halal (The Lawful) "That which is permitted with respect to which no restriction exists and the doing of which the Law of Allah, has allowed."

Al-Haram (The Prohibited or Unlawful): "That which the Law-Giver has absolutely prohibited anyone who engages in it is liable to incur the punishment of Allah in the Hereafter as well as a legal punishment in this world."

Al-Makruh (The detested) "That which is disapproved by the Law-Giver but not very strongly. The *Makruh* is less in degree than the *Haram*, and the punishment for *Makruh* acts is less than for those that are *haram*, except when done to excess and in a manner which leads an individual towards what is *haram*."

19. MANKIND IS EXHORTED TO EAT CLEAN FOODS

As Allah (SWT) is the Creator of all His creatures in all His universes, it is His responsibility to think of the best possible way of providing for all His creatures, and their sustenance and nourishment. He has therefore put an innate feeling in all creatures regarding what is best for them to consume. Each kind of animal knows what is best for it to eat. This applies specifically to human beings – of all races and creeds, of all sects, and religions, all colours and taints of skins – whom He addresses in the following words:

Oh mankind eat of that in the earth which is lawful and wholesome (clean) [*halalan tayyiban*], and follow not the footsteps of the devil (in eating unclean unwholesome food.) Indeed he (the Satan) is an open enemy for you (if you follow him.) He enjoins upon you (advises you or commands you to do) only the evil and the foul [*innama ya-murukum bis-sooi wal faksbaai*], and that you should tell concerning Allah that which you do not know.

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:168-169)

All the Prophets during their days were exhorted to eat clean foods:

Referring to Prophets Noah (AS), another prophet (without naming him), and a number of other prophets, including Moses (AS), Aaron (AS), and Ibn-Maryam, Jesus (AS) and his mother, Allah (SWT) addresses all the prophets, suggesting that He (SWT) exhorted them all to eat of the good things and pure [*Tayyebaat*] and to do righteous works as whatever they do, He (SWT) is watching and is aware of what they do:

Oh you messengers [*Ya ayyuhar-rusul*], eat of all things pure (clean) [*kullu min tayyebaat*], and do good deeds, as I am well-aware of all that you do.

(*Al-Moeminoon* 23:51)

Adam was the first to learn about prohibition

In the state of innocence, Adam and Eve (*Alaihiwasalam*)

were told to eat freely except from a particular tree.

And We said, "Oh Adam! Live you and your wife in the Garden (Jannah) and eat you freely of its (fruits) from wherever you desire; but come not near this tree lest you become wrongdoers.

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:35)

When the Satan caused the twain to err, they were driven out of the state of bliss both of them were in. Allah (SWT) said to them,

"Get you down [*ibbitu*]; you will be enemies to one another and there will be resting-place and provision for you (and your posterity.)"

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:36)

Prophet Noah exhorted his people to stay away from worshipping associates

Prophet Noah exhorted his people asking them to "turn to your Creator repentant so He would send rain to you in abundance and increase you in wealth and sons and bestow on you gardens and rivers. What is the matter with you that you are not conscious of Allah's majesty, seeing that it is He who has created you in diverse stages." (*Noah* 71:10-13). But Noah (AS)'s exhortation did nothing but increase their flight from the right path. (*Noah* 71:6)

Blani Israel was exhorted to eat what was clean

"And We made the clouds provide shade for you (in the open wilderness) and sent down to you *Manna* and *Salwah*, (saying, 'Eat of the good things We have provided for you' ...' (*Al-Baqarah* 2:57)... So (We said) eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah, and do not spread evil on the face of the earth like mischief-mongers. (*Al-Baqarah* 2:60).

Jews were forbidden certain foods

And for those who are Jews We forbade every animal with claws. And of the oxen and the sheep forbade We to them the fat of it, save that (which is) upon the backs of the entrails, or that which is mixed with the bone. That (restriction) we awarded them for their rebellion. And Indeed We are the Truthful. So if they give the lie to you (Oh Muhammad), say: 'Your Lord is a Lord of all embracing Mercy, and His wrath will never be withdrawn from the guilty folks.'

(*Al-An'aam* 6:148)

People Of the Book Were forbidden Some lawful foods for their disobedience

And to those who are Jews We forbade that which We have already explained to you.

And We wronged them not; but they were wont to wrong themselves.

(*An-Nahl* 16:118)

The People of the Book knew what clean food was: The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus

When the People of the Cave wake up from their long deep sleep (of about 309 years), the first thing they ask one another is how long they have slept in the cave. When they can not seem to agree on it, the next best thing they think of is the food. They did not want to be found out by the people out of the cave as they were afraid they would use force trying to re-convert them to the pagan ways. They also did not wish to eat the food the people were in the habit of eating. However, food was the need of the hour. So they gave money to one of the companions and instructed him how to go about getting the food without exposing himself. The point they made about the food is a guiding principle for Muslims. They said, "Then let him see (find out) which food is the cleanest [*fal-yandhur ayyuhun azkaa ta'aaman*], then let him bring some of the provision from it [*fal-ya'tikum bi-rizqin minh*]. (*Al-Kahf* 18:19).

Following the tradition of the Companions of the Cave, Muslims have to make an effort to make sure [*fal-yandhur*] that the food they eat is pure and clean, *halal* and *Tayyeb*, the cleanest of the clean, without doubt, without blemish.

The People of the Book did not forbid their people what was forbidden to them

Fight against those who do not believe in Allah, nor the Last Day, and do not declare unlawful what has been declared unlawful by Allah and His Messenger, and do not follow the religion of Truth – of the people of Book – until they pay the *jizya* readily with their hand, and are brought low (humbled).

(*At-Tawbah* 9:29)

The Role of this Messenger (Muhammad SAW)

Those who follow this Messenger (Muhammad), the unlettered Prophet whom they find written (described) in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them: He commands them of what is [*Ma'roof*] right (good, pure, or seemly), and forbids (them) what is [*Munkar*] evil (bad, wrong, impure, or unseemly). He makes lawful for them that which is good, clean, pure [*Tayyeba*]; and prohibits them the foul [*khabaith*]; and he relieves them of the burden and the fetters (or yokes) that were upon them. Then those who believe in him, and honour him, and help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him – they are the successful ones.

(*Al-A'raaf* 7:157)

Followers of this Prophet (SAW) are exhorted to eat clean foods

When Muslims were building up their social polity in Madinah, people used to ask about what was considered *Halal* and what was considered *Haram* according to their new religion. Finally, the response came from Allah (SWT):

Eat of the Pure things God has provided for you and be Grateful To Him

They ask you (Oh Muhammad), what is made lawful for them. Say: 'All good, clean things [*at-tayyibaat*] are made lawful for you...

(*Al-Maedah* 5:4)

Oh you who believe! Eat of the clean things [*kullu min Tayyebaat*] with which We have provided you, and give thanks to Allah if it is indeed He (Whom) you serve or worship.

(*Al-Baqara* 2:172)

So eat of the lawful and good (clean) food [*halalan tayyiban*] which Allah has provided for you [razaqumullah, and thank the bounty of your Lord [*ni'matallah*]] if it is Him that you serve or worship.

(*An-Nabl* 16:114)

20. THE PHYSICAL AND MORAL ASPECTS OF HALAL AND HARAM

As Semitic people, descendants of Ibraheem (AS), the Arabs, the sons of Ismael (AS) had almost the same ways in eating as did the sons of Isahaq and Israel (AS). The basic principle is that Islam prohibits what is *Khabeeth* and permits what is *Tayyeb*. The *Khabeeth* and the *Tayyeb* have already been made clear [*bayyan*], so there is no big dispute over what is eaten and what is not eaten in Islam. The Jewish prohibitions that had been inherited from Ibraheem (AS) were already known to Arabs and practiced by them. However, there were two differences between the days of Ibraheem (AS) and later times: On the one hand, the Jewish people had either declared certain *Halal* things *Haram* to themselves or Allah (SWT) made some of the things *Haram* for them (for their disobedience.) The Arabs, on the other hand, had made some of their own innovations and declared some of the *Halal* things *Haram* to some of their people. For example, Arabs invented the *Baheerah*, *Saibah*, *Waseelah*, and *Haam*, according to which, what had been *Halal* was declared *Haram* for certain people, saying, for example, "This is *Halal* for us, but *Haram* for our wives" (*Al-An'aam* 6:139) In addition to reiterating the prohibitions of Moses (AS), the Quran dwells upon both of these innovations (of Jews and Arabs), condemning them outright. However, it is the moral issue that pervades the entire Quran—suggesting that even what is physically *Halal* to eat, needs to be acquired or earned in the way that makes it *Halal* and keeps it so. We shall look at the question of *Halal* and *Haram* from these two perspectives: first, we shall describe the physical aspect of it, and then we shall turn to its moral aspect.

A. THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF HALAL & HARAM

What has Allah Forbidden Muslims to eat?

The main discussions on Prohibitions appear in four different Surahs in Quran: *Surah Baqarah* (2:168-174), *Al-Maedah* 5:1-5, 5:87-88, 5:95-96), *Al-Anaam* (6:137-148), and *An-Nabl* (16:5-9, 16:66, 16:115-118), although some minor details appear in other Surahs as well. For example, passages in *At-Tawbah* 9:29, *Yunus* 10:57-60, *Al-Moemin* 40:79-81, and *At-Tahreem* 66:11,

Dead animal (carrion), blood, swine-flesh, and dedications to anything other than God are listed invariably in all places. The command appears in all the four places (*Surah Baqarah* 2: 173, *Al-Maedah* 5:3, and *An-Nabl* 16:115) with minor differences in introductory remarks and other details. The version in *Surah Al-Maedah* is the most comprehensive and the latest one as it adds seven kinds of prohibited foods, the strangled, the dead through beating, the dead through falling, or dead through goring, eaten by wild beasts, immolated to idols, and distributed by divining arrows. The exception of necessity is expressed in all the four places in similar words:

“But if any one is forced by hunger, with no inclination to transgression, Allah is indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.”

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:173, *Al-Mai'dah* 5:3, *Al-An'aam* 145, *An-Nabl* 16:115)

<i>Al-Baqarah</i> 2:173 <i>An-Nabl</i> 16:115	<i>Al-An'aam</i> 6:145/146	<i>Al-Mai'dah</i> 5:3 Forbidden to you for food are:
He has forbidden you 1. carrion (dead animals) [<i>maitatu</i>], 2. and blood [<i>ad-dammu</i>], 3. and swine-flesh [<i>lahmulkhi nzeer</i>], 4. and that which has been immolated (dedicated) to any other than Allah...But if one is forced ...	Say (to them Oh Prophet!): I do not find in that which is revealed to me anything prohibited to an eater that he eat of it — except that it be 1. carrion (dead animal), 2. or dripping blood, 3. or swine-flesh, as it is an abomination [rijsun];	1-4 dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which has been invoked the name of other than Allah 5 and the strangled [munikhaniqatu], 6 and the dead through beating [mawqoodhatu], 7 and the dead through falling from a height [mutaraddiyatu], 8 and that which has been killed by (the goring of) horns [natehatu]; 9 and the devoured of wild beasts [wa man akalas-sabu'u] saving that

4. or the abhorrent thing which was immolated to the name of other than Allah. But if one is forced ...	which you make lawful (by slaughtering properly before it dies), 10 and that which has been immolated to idols; 11. and forbidden is that which you swear by the divining arrows, All this is an abomination [<i>fisq</i>] ... But if anyone...
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they have been prohibited to consume. They are specifically exhorted not to permit what has been prohibited, at the same time they have been asked specifically not to prohibit themselves what they have been permitted to eat. But there have always been people who have tried to replace God's commands by their own. They have done this for the sake of some personal or tribal motives of gain. Such people have been bold enough to claim the source of their distortion to be divine. We have already discussed how Paul worked his way out leaving all the apostles of Jesus helpless on-lookers, allowing the gentile followers to retain the pagan habits of their old religions under the name of a new religion.

Whose prerogative is it to decide what people should eat and what they should not eat?

The prerogative of making this decision belongs to Allah (SWT). It is not for any man, saint, or prophet to declare anything prohibited if Allah has permitted it to be eaten or permit it to be eaten if Allah has forbidden it.

He (Allah SWT) has explained to you what He has made haram for you...

(*Al-An-An'aam* 6:119)

Even Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's blessings be upon him, was reprimanded for temporarily prohibiting himself honey offered to him by one of his spouses:

Oh Prophet, why do you prohibit yourself that which Allah has made lawful for you...

(*At-Tahreem* 66:1)

Some scholars think that 'it is sufficient for us to

Prohibitions: Divine and Human

According to Islamic Shari'ah, only Allah (SWT) has the authority to declare things *Haram* or *Halal*. No prophets, saints, or rulers have the authority to declare *Haram* to be *Halal* or *Halal* to be *Haram*. There are basically two problems involving prohibition:

1. People have tried to permit what Allah has prohibited;
2. People have tried to prohibit what Allah has permitted.

According to the Quran, both of these situations are unacceptable to Allah (SWT). Human beings are told specifically what they have been permitted to consume and, likewise, they are told specifically what

know what Allah has made *haram*, since, according to this principle, what is not included in it is pure and permissible.³ Some of the traditions of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) clarify this further as he said:

What Allah has made lawful in His Book is *halal* and what He has forbidden is *haram*, and that concerning which He is silent is allowed as His favour. So accept from Allah His favour, for Allah is not forgetful of anything. He then recited, [*wa maa kaana Rabbuka nasiya*] "And your Lord is not forgetful." (*Surah Maryam* 19:64).

Another tradition of the Prophet says:

Allah has prescribed certain obligations for you, so do not neglect them; He has defined certain limits [hudood], so do not transgress them; He has prohibited certain things, so do not do them; and He has kept silent concerning other things out of mercy for you and not because of forgetfulness, so do not ask questions concerning them.

One may stop here to make the point that this and other traditions of the Prophet (SAW) do not prove that what has not been declared specifically *haram* in the Quran is definitely *halal* or '*afw*'. Case in question is that of many animals like cats, dogs, and mice which are not mentioned by Allah (SWT) in the Quran to

³The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam (*Al-Halal wal Haram fil Islam*) by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, 1985, Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur, 1994.

be *Haram*, but, we know from the *Old Testament* and the cultural and social norms of the Arab and Muslim societies that such animals are neither *Halal* for Muslims to eat nor do they fall in the category of ['*afw*'], favour of Allah (SWT).

Prohibiting What Allah (SWT) has Permitted

Oh you who believe, do not forbid the clean (good) things [*tayyebaat*] which Allah has made lawful for you; and do not transgress (or trespass or go beyond limits); Indeed Allah does not love transgressors. And eat of that which Allah has bestowed upon you as lawful and good (clean) [*halalan tayyiban*]; and fear One (Allah) in whom you are believers.

(*Al-Maedah* 5: 87-88)

We are specifically told that such people are not going to 'prosper' in the end – although it looks wonderful for them now.

And do not speak that concerning which your own tongues fabricate the falsehood (saying): 'This is lawful, and this is forbidden,' so that you invent a lie against Allah. Behold those who invent a lie against Allah will not prosper [*laa yuflihoon*]. (This will be) a brief enjoyment (for them here in this world); and then a painful doom for them (to follow in the Hereafter.)

(*An-Nahl* 16:116-117)

Slaying of Children & Forbidding Lawful Foods

Slaying of infants and forbidding lawful foods fall in the same category of changing the law of Allah to suit personal whims:

They are losers who have slain their children foolishly without (having the support of) knowledge, and have forbidden that which Allah bestowed upon them, inventing a lie against Allah. They indeed have gone astray; and they are not guided.

(Al-An'aam 6:141)

Examples of Distortions in Arabs Before Islam

Examples of such distortions come from the Arab tradition of paying tribute to the lesser gods from the tithe of their crops and their flocks of sheep and goat and herds of cattle, and from their inventing the concepts of *Hijr*, *Babirah*, *Saibah*, *Waseelah*, and *Haam*.

a. Allah's portion and the Associates' portion

They assign unto Allah, of the crops and cattle, which He created, a portion, and they say of their own accord (in their own make-believe fancy way): 'This is Allah's (portion)'; (and they say), 'and this is for His partners in regard to us.' Thus that which they assign unto His partners in them does not reach Allah; and that which they assign to Allah reaches to their 'partners' - (Neither portion reaching Him or being acceptable to God.) Evil is their ordinance. (Al-An'aam 6:136/137)

The Arabs used to spend the portion they had assigned to Allah on charitable deeds like relieving the poor and the wayfarer, and the other portion was given to the priests or keepers of the shrines of deities. Of course, Allah wanted nothing, stood in need of no presents and sacrifices from His worshippers and was well able to take care of Himself and His interests, so they gave away His portion to the associates. Thus His portion did not reach Him. The portion that they assigned to His associates, of course, doesn't really reach anybody -- but the associators think it reaches the associates, so be it. In the end, neither of the parts reaches God == that is neither part is acceptable to Him.

b. Hijr - The Taboo Animals

“.. and they say, ‘this cattle and this crop is forbidden or taboo’ [*hijr*]”

Hijr is really a stone, but an animal that is marked with a burnt stone or something else is *mahjur*. A mare is also called a *Hijr* as it carries a baby in her belly (like carrying a heavy stone in her belly). So a female pregnant, cattle, dedicated to a god (other than Allah) would be a *Hijr*, a forbidden animal to eat, a taboo.

(They say): ‘No one is to eat from them save those whom we allow.’ (they say this) in their make believe way ...

(They say this of their own accord, without any authority from Allah (SWT)).

They also claim that if animals have been dedicated

to certain deities, no one should ride them, and they say if an animal has been assigned to, for example, Laat, they should not invoke the name of Allah (SWT) on it while slaughtering it. Obviously, according to them, there would be a clash of interests between Allah and Laat.

And the cattle whose backs are forbidden (for riding), and the cattle over which they mention not the name of Allah: All this is a lie against Him (Allah)! He will repay them for that (lie) which they have invented.

(*Al-An'aam* 6:139)

c. Who Eats The Young Tender Meat of a Kid?

The young tender meat of the newly born kid (or the kid that has been taken out from the belly of the slaughtered mother) was considered to be a precious delicacy for the Arabs. They devised their own laws as to who would be permitted to eat of it and who would not be allowed to eat of it. Women-folks would be the first to be deprived of this rare delicacy. So the newly fabricated law said, "Only our males will eat of the kid, our females will not eat it". However, they said, if the kid is born dead, then all males and females will partake of it. All these discriminatory rules were repugnant to God. So He (SWT) rejected them thoroughly:

And they say: 'Whatever is in the bellies of these cattle is reserved for our males, and is forbidden to our females; but if it be born dead, then they all (males as well as

females) may be partakers of it.

He (Allah SWT) will certainly repay them for their attribution (of such ordinances to Him.) Indeed He is Wise (of what should be commanded), Aware (of what they are doing)!

(*Al-An'aam* 6:140)

d. Bahirah, Saibah, Waseelah, and Haam

After the decadence of the Tribe of Jarham, Khazaa'ah became the protectors and wards of Ka'abah. One of the chiefs of Khazaa'ah (Abu Khazaa'ah), 'Amr bin Lahye bin Qam'ah of Bani Ka'ab, was responsible for distorting the religion of Ibraheem. He was the first to innovate the tradition of *Saibah* in Arabs. Later on, he also introduced the customs of *Baherah* and *Haam*. He was also the first to introduce idols in Ka'abah and called people to idolatry. During the days of the Messenger of Allah (SAW), one of the companions of the Prophet was Aktham ibn el-Jun, also from the tribe of Khazaa'ah. The Messenger of Allah used to love this Aktham, and used to talk to him about 'Amr bin Lahye whom He had seen in Hell during the Nocturnal Journey (The night of Ma'araj). He (SAW) used to say to Aktham, "O Aktham, I saw 'Amr bin Lahye Khazaa'ah in Jahanum. I haven't seen another man who is more like you than him, and I haven't seen another man like you who is more like him than you. He looked exactly like you." Aktham asked the messenger if his resemblance with 'Amr bin Lahye Al-Khazaa'ah was going to be harmful for him. The Prophet answered, "No, he was a [*Kafir*] rejector and you are a [*moemin*] believer." The Mes-

senger of God said he had seen 'Amr bin Lahyc in hell, and the scorching heat and the bad smell from his body was atrocious for other people of the hell. There were two flames of fire dragging him from one place to another.

Baheerah was introduced by this man of the Bani Mudlaj. He had two female-camels. He pierced the can of both of them. First of all, he stopped drinking the milk of those she-camels. Later on, he started drinking their milk again.

Bahirah The word *Bahirah* is from *Babr* (sea or ocean) which signifies expansiveness, width, spaciousness, and vastness. Metaphorically, it referred to a camel whose ears were pierced extensively or widely. The expression [*Bahartul ba'cer*] meant "I have pierced the camel's ear widely." When a she camel came up to have given birth to ten calves (in ten breedings), they would pierce its ears and allow it to roam around. They did not ride it, neither did they use it to carry burdens until they sacrificed it over an idol.

Sai'bah was a she-camel that they used to let loose in the pastures and grazing grounds. No one would stop her from grazing and drinking water from anywhere. Such a camel was considered free of carrying people or burdens. *Saibah* is also a freed slave who has authority over his own wealth and property.

Waseela was a female camel (or goat/sheep) who was

allowed to move on freely and was not allowed to be slaughtered. *Waseelah* was one that gave birth to female twins six times and at the seventh pregnancy gave birth to a male and a female twins. This female was spared the slaughter, and so was its twin brother. Because of this female, its brother was also spared slaughter. That is why they would say [*wasalat akhahaa*] 'she has joined her brother with her.'

Haam was a male camel who had sired a certain number of kids, usually ten. They used to say about him that he had secured his back (in both senses of physical back and progeny [*Humiya dhahrubu*]), so no one should ride it.

"It was not Allah Who instituted the superstitions of *Bahirah*, *Saibah*, *Waseelah*, or *Haam*. It is the disbelievers who have invented a lie against Allah, and most of them have no intelligence (wisdom). And when it is said to them, "Come to what Allah has revealed, come to the Messenger," (giving up the devilish innovations) they say: "Enough for us are the ways we found our fathers following." What, even though their fore-fathers did not know anything and had been without guidance!"

(*Al-Maedah* 5: 103-4/105-106)

Eat what He has allowed you to eat (without distorting the law) on either side:

And of the cattle (He produces) some for burdens, others for food.
Eat of that which Allah has bestowed upon you,
and do not follow the footsteps of the devil;
for indeed he is open enemy to you.

(*Al-An'aam* 6:143)

Eight Pairs of Cattle

Allah's law is quite straightforward: if male is permitted, so is its female and what is in the belly. If a male is prohibited, its female and kid are also prohibited. No one can devise a law forbidding only one of the three, male, female, or the kid.

(Cattle allowed is of) eight pairs:

Of the sheep twain (male and female both),
and of the goats twain (male and female both);

Say (O Prophet): 'Has Allah forbidden the two males or the two females;
or those which the wombs of the two females contain?

Explain to me (this case) with knowledge,
if you are truthful.'

(*Al-An'aam* 6:143/144)

That is, bring a proof from the Scripture of you have any.

And of the camels twain and of the oxen twain:

Say (Prophet) : 'Has He forbidden the two males or the two females,

or that which the wombs of the two females contain?
Or were you by to witness when Allah commanded (all this)?' ...

(*Al-An'aam* 6:144/145)

Why do People invent such lies

There are mainly two reasons for inventing such lies, to lead people astray and to be in a position to exploit them.

a. People Invent lies to lead others astray

If there are still people around who wish to insist on one of the twain being forbidden and not the other, then they are inventing a lie. One of the purposes of inventing such a lie is to lead the mankind astray.

... Then who does greater wrong than the one who invents a lie against Allah, (so) that he may lead mankind astray. Indeed Allah does not guide the wrong-doing people.

(*Al-An'aam* 6:144/145)

b. People invent such lies to exploit others

Another reason for distorting the laws is to be in a position of authority from where sentiments of the masses can be exploited for personal gain. The question is answered in *Surah Al-Baqarah* Ayah 2:174 explaining why they distort God's revelation:

Indeed those who hide anything of the Scripture which Allah has revealed (They do this in order to) purchase a small gain with it...

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:174)

What is the punishment for such people?

Then comes the promise of punishments for taking such liberties with the laws of God. The punishments will be from four various points of view (depending upon what they had desired to achieve from the distortion)

- 1 they eat into their bellies nothing but fire.
- 2 Allah will not speak to them on the day of resurrection,
- 3 nor will He cleanse them (of their sins).
- 4 Theirs will be a painful doom. (*Al-Baqarah* 2:174)

Such people are certainly going to encounter a hard punishment for the lies they have invented against Allah (SWT), although there is always a possibility of forgiveness if they are willing to mend their ways.

And what do those who invent a lie concerning Allah think about their plight upon the Day of Resurrection! Indeed, Allah is truly bountiful to mankind, but most of them express no gratitude.

(*Tunus* 10:60)

Quran, a source of Bounty, Mercy, and Guidance!

O Mankind, there has come to you an

exhortation (Quran) from your Lord, (which is) a balm or a remedy, a cure [*shafaa*] for that which is in the breasts. (It is) a (source of) Guidance and a (source of) Mercy for believers. Say (O Prophet), 'In the Bounty of Allah and in His Mercy.'

In it (Quran, God's Bounty and Mercy) let them rejoice. It (the Quran, the source of Bounty and Mercy) is better for them than what they hoard. Say (O Prophet): 'Have you considered what provision Allah has sent down for you. (Then) how you have made of it lawful and unlawful (according to your whims)?'

Say (to such people, O Prophet): "Has Allah permitted you, or have you invented a lie concerning Allah?"

(*Tunus* 10:57-59)

Killing Halal Animals And Birds In Game Is Permitted:

... And those beasts and birds of prey which you have taught as Allah has taught you -so eat of that (permitted game) that they catch for you, and mention the name of Allah upon it, and fear Allah; Indeed Allah is swift in reckoning.

(*Al-Maedah* 5:4)

Killing Wild game during *ihraam* is prohibited

Oh you who believe, fulfil your pacts [*awfoo*

bil-'ugood] (with Allah); (and know that) the beast of cattle is made lawful to you (for good) except that which is announced to you (herein); game being unlawful when you are on pilgrimage. Indeed Allah ordains that which He likes.

(*Al-Maa'idah* 5:1)

The message comes again towards the end of the same Surah:

Oh you who believe, do not kill wild game while you are on the pilgrimage.. To hunt and to eat the catch of water (sea, river, and lake) [*saidul-bahr*] is made lawful for you; (it has been made) a provision for you and for travellers; but to hunt on land is forbidden you so long as you are on the pilgrimage. (So) fear Allah unto whom you will be gathered.

(*Al-Maedah* 5:95-96)

The Food of the People of the Book

Today are all clean things [*tayyebaat*] made lawful for you; The food of those who have received the Scripture is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them; Then whoever denies the faith, his work is vain; and he will be among the losers in the hereafter.

(*Al-Maedah* 5:5)

The food of the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) is permitted to Muslims if it is food that

is permitted to them according to their Scriptures (The Torah of Moses [AS] and The Injil of 'Isa [AS]), and if it is slaughtered according to the way prescribed to them in their scriptures. This means that the food that we shall have no problem eating would be the food that the Prophets of the People of the Book, Moses (AS) and 'Isa (AS), ate. To put it bluntly, we shall not eat the additional things that Paul permitted the Christendom to eat. That is, we shall not eat pork in its various forms, and we shall not eat a permitted animal if it is slaughtered in the name of anyone other than Allah (SWT), and if it is not slaughtered in the way prescribed by Judaism or Islam.

The people of the Book should have, basically, no problem eating our food – as we eat only what they are permitted to eat – except, of course, that the Jews do not eat the camel as Muslims do, and certain parts of the permitted animals had been prohibited to the Bani Israel (because of their disobedience!). They may also have a problem with our way of slaughtering the animal. However, the Quranic injunction means that it is permitted to us to offer our food to the People of the Book (that is, it is lawful for them to eat it if they wish to do so). What was the use of making such a distinction? It would be helpful to understand this if we remember that this is in contrast with the Jewish way according to which they were prohibited to offer their food to any uncircumcised or non-Jewish people. Now it would be up to them to decide whether or not they consider it lawful for them to eat our food. We can't force them to eat but the injunction gives us the freedom of offering it to them.

Exceptions When Life is at Stake

When following exhortations, injunctions, and laws regarding prohibited food, we are required to make exceptions in cases of extreme hardship when life is really at stake. If people are dying of hunger and there is no lawful food available, they can eat even what is prohibited in order to save their lives. Life of a human being is more sacred than keeping the strictness of the sanctified food. Quran states this exception at three different places with minor differences in words [*innallaha/ fa-innallaha/fa-inna rabbaka ghafoor-ur raheem*]:

But whoever is driven (or forced to eat forbidden food) because of necessity, neither (because of) craving [*ghaira baaghin*] nor (because of) transgressing [*wa la 'aadin*], it is no sin for him. Indeed Allah (your Lord) is Forgiving, Merciful.

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:173; *Al-An'aam* 6:145/146; *An-Nahl* 16:115)

This necessity is further defined as 'hunger' in *Surah Al-Maedah*:

Then, know that) whoever is forced by hunger [*fi makhmasatin*] not by will to sin [*ghaira mutajanifil li-ithm*] (in eating the prohibited food) Then (for him), indeed, Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

(*Al-Maedah* 5:3)

The laws described in *Surah Al-Maedah* complete the religion of Islam for Muslims:

Today are those who disbelieve in despair regarding (their efforts of harming) your religion; So fear them not; but fear Me. This day have I perfected your religion for you; and I have completed My favour upon you; And I have chosen for you as religion Al-Islam..

(*Al-Maedah* 5:3)

The Basic Principles Derived From The Quranic Injunctions:

The Ulemae (religious scholars) of the Past have derived Basic Principles of *Halal* and *Haram* from the Quranic Injunctions. Allamah Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, a contemporary scholar of Al-Azhar, has summarised those principles and then elaborated upon them in his beautifully written book [*Al-Halal wal Haram fil Islam*]. Originally written in Arabic, this book has been translated in a number of languages including English and Malay. In this book, the theme of *Haram* and *Halal* encompasses all aspects of the lives of Muslim. Having undertaken a thorough discussion on *Halal* and *Haram* in Foods and Drinks, the book, in its four chapters, goes on to cover the themes of Clothing and Adornment, In the Home, Work and Earning A Livelihood, Family, Marriage, and Divorce, Parents and Children, Beliefs and Customs, Business Transactions, Recreation and Play, Social Relations, and Relationship of the Muslims with the Non-Muslims. We shall here provide the summary of the Principles on which Allamah Yusuf Al-Qaradawi has based his discussion in Chapter one:

THE ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES PERTAINING TO HALAL & HARAM

- The basic *asl* (origin, source...) is the permissibility of things.
- To make lawful and to prohibit is the right of Allah alone.
- Prohibiting the *Halal* and Permitting the *Haram* is similar to committing *Shirk*.
- The prohibition of things is due to their impurity and harmfulness.
- What is *halal* is sufficient, what is *haram* is superfluous.
- Whatever is conducive to *Haram* is itself *Haram*.
- Falsely representing the *haram* as *halal* is prohibited.
- Good intentions do not make the *haram* acceptable.
- Doubtful things are to be avoided.
- The *Haram* is prohibited to everyone alike.
- Necessity dictates exceptions.

The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Translated by: Kamal El-Helbawy, M. Moinuddin Siddiqui, Syed Shukry, and reviewed by Ahmad Zaki Hammad, first published in UK by Shorouk International, 1985. This edition was published by Islamic Book Trust, Malaysia, 1994.

B. SOME MORAL ASPECTS OF HALAL & HARAM

Acquisition of Lawful Things by Unlawful Means Makes the Things Haram and Prohibited

As we have seen already, what is physically *Halal* may still be *Haram* to eat because of the unlawful means used in acquiring it. The wealth and property that is acquired by unlawful means like bribery, robbery, deceit, improper balancing, weighing, and measuring, etc. is also unlawful, and an evil [*baatil* and *Khabeeth*].

- Acquiring Something From the Means of Bribery and Deceit Is Prohibited or Haram*
Allah (SWT) says:

And do not eat up property of one another wrongfully, in an evil way, [*bil-baatil*], offering it to the rulers or judges [*wa tudloo bibaa ilal hukkam*] (as bribe) so that you may knowingly devour a portion of the property of other people wrongfully.
(*Al-Baqarah* 2:188)

When *Halal* and *Haram* have been made manifest, taking cases to *Hukkam* which deliberately, deprive the rightful owners of their property is an outrage against the Book of God. Both the *hukkam* and the intriguers will be putting fire into their bellies if they eat property that is ill-gotten:

Those who conceal Allah's revelations

by witnessing or judging against the law of God) and gain by it a miserable profit – they devour in their bellies nothing but fire [*ulaatika maa ya'akuloona fi butoonihim illan-naar*];

Allah will not speak to them (address them) on the Day of Judgement, nor will He purify them (to be sent to Jannah); grievous will be their punishment.

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:174)

The sinner's food is the tree of *Zuqqoom*, like molten brass in the belly:

Indeed the tree of *Zuqqoom* will be the food of the sinful [*ta'aamil atheem*], Like molten brass [*kal-mubli*], it will boil in their bellies [*yaghli fil butoon*] like the boiling of scalding water, (It will be said) "Seize him and drag him into the midst of the blazing fire!" (*Ad-Dukhaan* 44:45)

b. Devouring The Property of Orphans Is Prohibited

[*Al-yutmu*] is the deprivation of a child (non-adult) of the compassion of father (the male parent). This notion of [*yutmu*] applies to a kid of an animal other than human beings when it is deprived of its mother. It does not necessarily imply the death of the parent in question, but separation from the parent responsible for the child's sustenance and nourishment (male in human beings, female in the case of animals) when the child or kid is dependent on the parent. Being orphan is not a

despicable status, but a status deserving compassion from both human beings as well as Allah (SWT). This is more so because our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was an orphan, and Allah (SWT) said for him, [*Alam yajidka yateeman, fa-aawaa*] (Did He not find you an orphan, then He provided you shelter!) (*Adh-Dhuha* 93:6). Those people who have responsibility or trust pertaining to orphans are warned against eating the property of orphans:

Those who forcibly, transgressingly [*dhulman*] eat up the property of orphans, eat up a fire in their bellies; they will soon be enduring a blazing fire.

(*An-Nisaa'* 4:10)

Those who have orphan's property in their custody are required to return the property of their wards, the *yateem*, to them (as soon as they acquire adulthood) (*An-Nisaa'* 4:5-6) and are warned against substituting (changing the) better property [*tayyeb*] (that belongs to the orphans) by the bad property [*khabeeth*] (that belongs to you) (*An-Nisa* 4:2)

To orphans restore their property (when they reach their age), neither substitute your worthless things for their good ones, nor devour their substance (by mixing it up) with your own. For indeed this is a great iniquity (sin).

(*An-Nisaa'* 4:2)

Muslims have been exhorted to do good to orphans like Prophets Khidr and Moosa (AS) did to the orphans

by straightening the wall of their house (*Al-Kahf* 18:82)

They ask you about the orphans, say, (what is) the best for them is what improves their lot [*Isalahu lahum khayr*]

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:220).

There is a strong warning for those who mistreat the orphans, implying that such people do not believe in the Day of Judgement – and consequently the punishment is waiting for them, no matter how often they say their ritual prayers.

Have you seen the one who denies the Day of Judgement? [*fa-dalikal-ladhi yadaul yateem*] Then it is the one who repulses the orphan and does not provide for the feeding of the poor. So woe is to such worshippers...

(*Al-Maa'oon* 107:2)

By extension [*Yateem*] is one who can not protect his interests from the transgressors or stronger people in the community. For example, if a ruler takes away by force the property of a poor person, if an officer deprives his subordinate of his rights in terms of salaries, wages, promotions, the officer will have to answer on the day of judgement why he did it. The official cases and files that have been prepared by the 'officers', the rulers of this world, shall not be acceptable to Allah (SWT) as He knows what is in human beings' minds.

c. *Devouring The Inheritance Rights and Property of Women-folks Is Prohibited*

Quran is the first among all religious or secular books that recognises women's rights to inherit from husbands, parents, sons, brothers, sisters, and sustenance from other relatives. The details of portions, too detailed for a casual reading, appear in *An-Nisaa'* 4:11-12. (In fact, the need to resolve the inheritance problems according to certain detailed mathematical formulae was a major impetus behind Arab interest in Algebra.)

Oh you who are believers, it is not lawful for you to inherit women (or their property) forcibly (against their will), nor should you treat them with harshness (in order that) you may take away a part of the dower you have given them...

(*An-Nisaa* 4:19)

d. *Devouring the Property of the People of Other Ethnic and Religious Groups is Prohibited:*

The People of the Book, particularly the Jewish people, had this moral blind spot (and still is) that they consider themselves Chosen people of God and His sons. This made them feel so sure of their own righteousness and other people's lack of righteousness that they would consider it morally right to defraud the gentiles, the non-Jewish people, especially, Arabs, the 'Umiyy-yeen, the unlettered ones:

Among the People of the Book are some who, if entrusted with a hoard of gold

[*qintaar*], will readily pay it back; but among them are others, who, if entrusted with a single silver coin [*deenaar*], he will not pay it back unless you constantly stood demanding, because they say, "There is no way over us as to the unlettered people," (that is, we are not required by our religion or our Book to treat them fairly), but (by saying such a thing) they are telling a lie against Allah, and well they know it.

(*Aal-Imraan* 3:75)

c. *Devouring One Another's Property By Illegitimate Means Is Prohibited:*

Oh you who believe, do not eat up property of one another, wrongfully, except that you have traffic of trade with one another by mutual good-will and consent...

(*An-Nisaa'* 4:29)

f. *Devouring Usury Is Prohibited*

Those who devour usury will not stand (tall when being Judged), but shall stand like one whom Satan by his touch has driven to madness. That is because they say, "Trade is like Usury," but Allah has permitted trade and forbidden usury. Those who, after receiving admonition from their Lord, desist, shall be forgiven for (what they have done in) the past, and their case is with Allah (to judge). But those who repeat (the offence after the admonition has already arrived), they are companions of the Fire; they will abide in it for ever. Allah has deprived usury

(of all blessings) and has blessed (increased in blessings) the charitable deeds [*sadaqaat*]. For Allah does not love any ungrateful sinner.

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:275-276)

Furthermore, Allah (SWT) says:

Oh you who believe, Fear Allah and give up what remains of your demand for usury, if you are indeed believers. Then if you do not do this, then take note of the call for war from Allah and His Messenger, but if you repent, you shall have your capital sums. Do not deal unjustly, and you shall (also) not be dealt with unjustly.

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:278-279)

Again, Allah (SWT) warns people: there is no real prosperity or success [*falaah*] in usury:

Oh you who are believers, do not devour usury doubled and multiplied; and fear Allah, so that you may really prosper.

(*Aal-Imraan* 3:130)

Allah has not blessed usury, He has blessed Zakah:

That which you give in usury for increase through the property of (other) people, will have no increase with Allah; but that which you give in charity [*zakah*], seeking the countenance (Face) of Allah (will increase with

Allah): it is these who will get a recompense multiplied.

(*Ar-Rome* 30:39)

g. *Fraud in Weights and Measures Is Prohibited*

Living In A Balanced Universe

Surah Ar-Rahmaan brings home to the reader's imagination the fact that whatever Allah (SWT) has created is there according to certain law, equity, or balance that He (SWT) has established in His universes. This brings home the necessity of not destroying the balance of the universe if we have to live in it with harmony. As soon as this Balance is destroyed, there will be chaos in the universe. Thus comes the commandment requiring people to maintain the balance: keep the balance with equity and justice.

And the firmament He has raised high

And He has set up the Balance (because of which the universe is sustained)

Beware (then), do not transgress the Balance,

And establish weight and justice,

And do not defraud in the balance (by cutting it short)...

(*Ar-Rahmaan* 55:7-9)

The recurring theme of *WAZN*, *QIST*, and *MEEZAAN* warns of punishment for those who deceive in weights and measures. Prophet Shu'aib (AS) warns his people of Madayan, again and again, against cutting short the measure in *Surah Al-A'araaf* (7:85-92), Hud

11:84-94), *Asb-Shu'uraa'* (26:176-190) and *Al-Ankabut* (29). One typical part of the speech of Prophet Shu'aib (AS) is in *Surah Shu'uraa'*:

... Fear Allah and obey me... Give just measure, and cause no loss (to others by fraud), and weigh with scales true and upright, and do not withhold from people things that justly belong to them, nor do evil in the land, working mischief. And fear Him Who created you and (Who created) the generations before you."

(*Asb-Shu'rae* 26:181)

One of the Surahs (chapters) is named after those who defraud in weights and measures [*Al-Muttafafeen*]

"Woe to those who deal in fraud [*wailu lil-Muttafiffeen*], those who, when they have to receive by measure or weight from men, they exact (demand and take) full measure. But when they have to give by measure or weight to men, they give them less than due." (*Al-Muttafiffeen* 83:1-3)

The Moral Code In Business Transactions

One of the many beautiful passages of Quran is the one that describes the moral code in business transactions says:

And do not approach the wealth of orphan [*Wa laa taqraboo maalal -yateem*] except with (that intention) which is better, till he (the

orphan under your care) reach maturity. Give full measure and full weight, equitable in justice. We do not put a person to hardship beyond his/her capability, and if you give your word (make a promise), then do justice to it (keep it) [*wa idhaa qultum, fa'adiloo*], even if it (turns out to be against) near relative, and fulfill the covenant with Allah. This He has commanded you so that you may take heed.

(*Al-An'aam* 6:152/153)

Similar message appears in *Al-Israa* 17:34-35 with particular emphasis on keeping the covenant [*'abad*], as 'of the covenant there will be inquiry.'

21. PROHIBITION OF DRINKS IN ISLAM

The First Revelation

While the Prophet (SAW) was still in Makkah, there had been received no commandments regarding drinking. When Muslims were busy building up a society and a social structure in Madinah, there were quite a few Muslims who looked at drinking with aversion and abhorrence as, according to Rasheedudin Al-Maibudawi, they found it responsible for loss of respect [*hatak burmat*],

destruction of the sense of politeness [*kharaq-e murrawat*],

and the defects like the downfall of wisdom [*zawal-e aql*],

loss of wealth [*ziyane maal*],
enmity [*'adaawat*],
and quarrel and warfare [*'urbadah*].

Amirul Moemineen 'Umar Ibne Khittab is reported to have said that *Khamr* is what covers up the intelligence or wisdom. Such people used to ask the messenger of Allah (SAW): Has anything been revealed about [*khamr* and *maisar*], intoxicants and gambling? Most of the sources say that the persistent enquirer about [*khamr*] was Umar ibn Khittab (*radiallah t'aala 'anhu*). Masnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, and Nisai, Ibne Abi Hatim, and Ibne Marduyah have reported the story of prohibition from different sources. Abu Maisarah 'Amr bin Sharhabil Hamadani Kufi is reported to have narrated that Umar ibn Khittab (RA) prayed to God, "O our Allah, give us an evident commandment regarding drinking."

In answer to such queries and prayers of Muslims, came the first revelation about intoxicants that is in Surah *Al-Baqarah* (2:219), telling people that intoxicants had sins as well as benefits – but that the sins outweighed the benefits.

They ask you about intoxicants [*khamr*] and gambling [*maysir*]; Say: 'In both there is great [*ithm*] sin, and some [*manaafi*] (utilities, usefulness, benefits) for men; but the sin of them is greater than their usefulness.'

(*Al-Baqarah* 2:219)

The 'benefits' referred to here were in the sense that when there were drinking orgies in private parties, people used to boast about their generosity and slaughter animals to be fed to their guests. The poor and the wealthy would thus equally benefit from this boastful generosity in the sense that everybody used to get something to eat. This one-way 'benefit' was not meant to be for the owner of the property as it was not consumed in the way of Allah as *sadaqah* – (almsgiving) – because the slaughters as well as the parties were done for self-glorification rather than for the sake of Allah. Neither was the *khamr* 'beneficial' as a source of cure or Shafaa against diseases. This was in the sense that wine would have no curing qualities. According to the tradition of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) there is no cure in what Allah has declared *haram*. Nevertheless, the poor used to benefit in the sense that they used to have a chance to eat their fill at the expense of the drunken rich. That was one of the benefits Allah (SWT) refers to in this *ayah*. The other 'benefit' may have been from commercial point of view. Making wine and selling it would bring money in people's homes. Mostly, the trade of wine was in the hands of Jews, and they would definitely benefit from the trade.

However, Allah (SWT) emphasised the greater extent of sinfulness attached to drinking rather than the benefits it may imply. People knew how the drunk were likely to have little respect for their elders, how their drinking destroyed their sense of politeness and obscured their intelligence and wisdom, how drinking made them lose their wealth and property for Satan rather than on good deeds in the way of Allah (SWT), how it established enmities among people, giving way to quarrels and

warfares, and how religion was destroyed by drinking. There was no benefit that can outdo all these disadvantages.

The tradition goes on to say that Umar ibni Khittab (RA) was sent for and this *Ayah* was recited to him. It seems he was not satisfied in his heart. He prayed to God again, saying, "Oh God we want to have an order, a command, more evident and sufficient than this one."

The Second Revelation About Intoxicants

When Muslims in Madinah heard the first revelation about intoxicants (that appears in *Surah Baqarah*), they said the revelation has referred to both benefits and harms of intoxicants, they have not been declared haram. When some of them gave up drinking, others continued to drink as the revelation did not specifically prohibit drinking. This went on until Abdur Rahman Bin Awf invited some companions of the Prophet (SAW) at his house. They had wine in their midst and they kept drinking until some of them got drunk and lost their senses. Then the time approached for the prayer. One of the migrants [*muhajireen*] in the company stood in the front to lead the prayer. As he recited Surah 'Al-Kaafiroon', instead of reciting 'I shall not worship whom you worship...', he said, 'I shall worship whom you worship' and instead of saying 'Your religion for you and my religion for me,' he said, 'For you is your religion of association [kufr] and for me is my religion of Islam.' This incident was reported to the Prophet (SAW), and then the second commandment regarding drinking was revealed, the *Ayah* in *Surah An-Nisa* (4:43), telling

time for prayer was approaching. They considered the intoxicants to be a temporary pollution like the state of physical impurity because of *junnub* with which drinking seemed to them to have been equated.

When they recited this Ayah to 'Umar (RA), he said, "There still remains some confusion. Oh God, we want an ayah that is clearer and more evident. It (the *khamr*) destroys wealth and takes away intelligence. Make the commandment sufficiently evident for us."

The Third Revelation About Drinking

In spite of the strong prohibition of saying prayers in the state of drunkenness, people continued drinking, until one day, a group of the Ansars (helpers, original residents of Madinah) got together in one of the Ansars' houses as guests (and there was a party going on) and they had alcoholic drinks (intoxicants). Hamza ibn Abdul Muttalib (RA), the uncle of the Prophet (SAW), was also there. As Hamza (RA) came out, he was out of himself, drunk. He saw approaching two camels which belonged to his nephew, Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA). The camels were laden with Adhkhar (odoriferous rush, fragrant or aromatic grass). Hamzah (RA) took out his sword and attacked the camels. Someone told him to whom the camels belonged, whereupon he said, "Aren't you all slaves of my father, Abdul Muttalib?" He struck the camels, repeatedly, and tore open their bellies, killing them. He took out their livers throwing the meat on the fire to roast. When Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA) got at the scene and saw what he saw, he wailed. He came to the Prophet (SAW) and told him what had happened.

believers not to get closer to prayer when they were intoxicated, drunk, until they knew what they were reciting. The commandment said:

Oh you who believe, do not draw near prayer when you are drunken [*sukaaraa*] until you know what you are saying; nor when you are (in the state of physical pollution) [*junnuban*]...

(An-Nisaa 4:43..)

From this time onwards, as they used to call people for prayer, the Mua'dhins used to add an expression telling people not to come to mosque if they had had *khamr*. This expression was added after "*Hayye 'ala-as-salah*." Muslims who had intoxicants thus would not approach the prayer or the mosque. This would be alright for the hypocrites, but a great loss for those who believed, and a source of humiliation for them. The additional words in the Adhaan reminded them that they were not in the path of *fallah*, where the next words were supposed to call people - '*Hayye 'alal fallah, hayye 'alal fallah*.' It must have been an embarrassment for some that they were not part of the congregation only because they had had an intoxicant. To be prohibited from saying their prayers brought to some Muslims a great sense of personal loss and deprivation. They knew the enjoyment they expected from a drink was not worth the loss they were to suffer if they were deprived from saying their prayers. They argued with one another saying there can be no goodness in something that keeps you from saying your prayers. So some of them gave up drinking, but there were still a large number of people who went on drinking, only being careful not to drink when the

Commentators say after this and a few other similar incidents of drunken strife, Jibrael (AS) came bringing the verses of *Surah Al-Maedah* that prohibit *Khamr*, Maisar etc, starting with, "O you who are believers, intoxicants [*Khamr*] and gambling and idols and divining with arrows are only [rijs], an infamy, a wickedness ..." until when Allah (SWT) said, [*fa bal antum muntahoon*], "Then, will you stop, desist?"

When Umar (RA) heard of the latest revelation, he cried out (gratefully) "*Antabeena, Antabeena, Yaa Rabb*" "We have stopped, we have stopped, O Lord." One of the traditions says that the Messenger of God got up on his *minbar* in the mosque and announced the prohibition of the intoxicants. Another tradition in the two books of Sahih traditions says that when prohibition was announced, Umar Ibne Khittab got up on the *Minbar* of the prophet in the mosque to inform people that intoxicants had been declared *Haram*. He said any intoxicant that is made from grapes, dates, honey, wheat, or barley was *khamr*, and all *khamr* was *Haram*, prohibited. *Khamr* was a general term that was used for anything that covers up senses, or intoxicates. It could be liquid, powder, solid, gas, or in any other form. Muslims got up and went to their houses, brought out their containers of alcoholic drinks and spilled them on the streets of Madinah.

Seventeen Reasons Why The Believers Should Avoid Intoxicants

The prohibition passage (*Al-Maedah* 90-92) gives us seventeen rather intellectually convincing reasons why believers should stop drinking (if they had not given

up drinking already).

- 1 [*Ta ayyu-bal-ladhi*] O you who are
- 2 believers,
- 3 intoxicants [*Khamr*] and gambling and idols and
- 4 divining with arrows are only an infamy, a wickedness [*rijs*],
- 5 [*min 'amali-sh shaitaan*] of Satan's handiwork.
- 6 [*fajtaniboo*] so, leave it aside, avoid it
- 7 [*la'allakum tufihoon*] in order that you may prosper.
- 8 Satan seeks only to cast among you enmity [*adaawah*]
- 9 and [*baghdhaa*] hatred by means of intoxicants [*khamr*] and gambling,
- 10 and [*yaSuddakum*] to prevent you, keep you away, from [*zikrillah*] remembrance of Allah
- 11 [*wa 'anis-Salah*] and from His worship.
- 12 [*fa bal antum muntahoon*] Will you then stop, desist?
- 13 [*wa aTee'ullab*] And obey Allah
- 14 [*wa aTee'ur-rasool*] and obey the Messenger (of Allah),
- 15 [*wa-hdharu*] and beware, stay away;
- 16 [*fa-in tavallaitum*] But if you turn away (from our commandments),
- 17 then know that the duty of Our Messenger is only plain conveyance (of the message.)

(*Al-Maedah* 5:90-92)

The first and foremost point that we need to understand is that Allah (SWT) has told us that on the day of Judgement there will be people with whom He (SWT) will not speak (neither will He look at them nor will He purify them (*Al-Baqarah* 2:174, *Aal-Imraan*

3:77). What is to follow in the hereafter is reflected in this world in His Book, the Quran, as well. That is, Allah (SWT), in His Book, does not address (speak directly to) the non-believers, neither as individuals as Nimrod, Pharaoh, Shaddad, Korah, Abu Lahab, or Abu Jahal, nor in groups as infidels, rejecters, or transgressors. Instead He (SWT) asks His Messengers to speak to such people. For example, He (SWT) asks Noah to speak to his people, but does not speak to them Himself. He asks Ibraheem (AS) to speak to Nimrod, Adhar, and other people of his times, but does not speak to those people Himself. He (SWT) asks Moosa (Moses AS) to speak to Pharaoh, instead of speaking to him Himself. He (SWT) asks Muhammad (SAW) to speak to people like Abi Lahab, Abi Jahal, and 'Utbah, instead of addressing them Himself. He addresses only those people whom He has chosen [*asTafa*] over and above other people of the world. He does not speak to those whom He has not chosen in this world. He (SWT) chose Adam (AS) for His Khalifah and directly addressed him and spoke to him, saying, "Ya Adam [*uskun*] reside you and your wife in the Garden..." (*Al-Baqara* 2:35; *Al-A'raaf* 7:19), "Ya Adam, tell them their names..." (*Al-Baqarah* 2:33). Allah (SWT) spoke to Noah (AS), saying, "*Ya Noah, ibbit bi-salamin minna wa barakatin 'alaik*" 'Oh Noah, land with peace from Me and blessings.." (*Hud* 11: 48). He (SWT) spoke to Syedna Ibraheem (AS), saying [*Ya Ibraheem a'aridh 'an baadha*] "Oh Ibraheem, let it (the discussion about Qawm Lut) go..." (*Hud* 11:76) To Moosa (Moses) (AS), Allah (SWT) said, "Ya Moosa, I have chosen you over and above other human beings for my message and for speech" (*Al-A'araaf* 7:144). Quran gives us nine examples when Allah (SWT) spoke to Moses (AS) by name (telling him,

for example, at the Toor that He (SWT) is his Lord and God, asking him not to be afraid, asking him what he had in his hand, asking him to let the stick go, and when in the court of Pharaoh not to be afraid, etc. (in *Surahs Taha, An-Namal* and *Al-Qasas*). Allah (SWT) spoke to Daud (AS), saying, "*Ya Daud, inna ja'alnaka khaleefat fil ardh, fahkum bain-anaas bil-Haq*" (*Swad* 38:26), "Ya, Daud, I have made you viceroy on this earth, so judge among mankind with justice." Allah (SWT) spoke to Zakariya (AS) [*Ya Zakariya...*], giving him the good news of his son (*Maryam* 19:7). He spoke to Maryam [*Ya Maryam-uqniti li-rabbiki...*], O Maryam pray to your Nourisher and Sustainer... (*Aal-'Imraan* 3:36). He spoke to Yahya [*Ya Yahya Khuzul Kitaab bi-quwwah...*], Ya Yahya, get hold of the book with all the strength... (*Maryam* 19:12). He (SWT) addressed the fire, mountains, and birds when He (SWT) chose them to perform actions of His choice. To Fire, He said, [*Ya Naru, kunee bardan wa salaman 'ala Ibraheem*], Oh Fire, become cool and a source of safety and peace on Ibraheem' (*Al-Anbiya* 21:69). To the mountains and birds He (SWT) said, [*Ya Jibbalu, awwi bi ma'abu wat-Tair*] "Oh mountains, come out with him (Daud AS singing) and you birds..." (*Saba* 34:10).

Allah (SWT) addressed these persons and animate and inanimate creatures for their 'submission' to Him. He also addressed human beings as *Ya-ayyuhān-Naas* (14 times) and *Ya-Bani Adam* (4 times, all in *Surah A'raaf*) as there are believers and potential believers among them. He also addresses the Bani Israil directly reminding them of the blessings He had bestowed upon them (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:40 and a number of other places.) But when Kuffar need to be addressed, He (SWT) asks

His Messenger (SAW) to address them, [*Qul*] (say Oh Muhammad), *Yaa Ayyubal Kaafiroon...* (*Surah Kaafiroon* 109:1).

Allah (SWT) in this Ayah (verse) of *Khamr* and *Maisar* is addressing those who are believers in Him. It is an honour to be chosen by Allah (SWT) and to be addressed by Him (SWT) by name or by attribute. He has said He would not look at the non-believers and would not talk to them. Now as He (SWT) is addressing us as those who are believers, and He does that 89 times in the Quran, it is a great honour and recognition, a source of bliss and blessings, to be addressed by Allah (SWT). How glad would you be if the President, the Prime Minister, or the King of your country addressed you personally by name! In the present situation, the King of Kings, the King of the Universes, Allah (SWT) is addressing you as one of these believers. Now all you need to do is to prove that you deserve to belong to that *zumra*, that group.

Second reason is that the Quran is meant to be followed by its believers in its totality, but the believers are told to be attentive when they are being addressed, in particular with the words [*Yaa ayyuhal-ladheena amanoo*] 'Oh you who are believers', because this form of address is a command from Allah (SWT) following of which is to distinguish believers from non-believers. So we are told that when we hear the words 'O you who are believers,' know that what follows is a commandment from Allah (SWT), the exhortation of it has to be followed. The one who turns away from such an injunction falls in the category of non-believers.

The first two reasons should be sufficient for those

Muslims who love to adhere to Allah's commands, but as human beings are created weak, these words were not sufficient for many of them to give up drinking. However, the greater the man's temptation for evil, the greater the persistence of God in admonishing him so that the man may have ample opportunities to take heed. Therefore come two more reasons-rational arguments - **the third and the fourth** - explaining why intoxicants should be given up and why they are being prohibited. The **third** reason is that Allah (SWT) says it is *rijs* a source of impurity, contamination. Everything that is *rijs* has to be avoided. The Carrion, the blood, and the swine-flesh are *rijs* (*Al-An'aam* 6:145), that is why they are *Haram*. Worshipping idols and the speech of falsehood are *rijs* (*Al-Hadj* 22:30), that is what makes them *Haram*. The hypocrisy and non-belief are diseases of *rijs* which Allah only increases (*At-Tawbah* 9:125). *Khamr*, *Maisar*, *ansaab*, and *azlaam* are likewise *rijs*, and they have not only to be avoided but shunned.

The **fourth** reason is that Allah (SWT) calls it a handiwork of Satan against the gullible human beings, sons of his old enemy, Adam (AS). Time and again, we are told in Quran not to follow Satan, not to worship Satan, because following him is equated with worshipping him. Satan sows the seeds of enmity, ill-will, and hostility through drinking and gambling. Whoever rejects or denies the *Taaghoot* or Satan and believes in Allah, he is the one who has been able to hold fast to the rope of strength (that is, Islam) that never breaks and Allah is the One Who Hears (what people say) and Knows (what people do). (*Al-Baqarah* 2:256).

Then comes the **fifth** reason, an imperative, [*fa-*

jianibool], telling us to leave it aside, avoid it, give it up. When Allah (SWT) commands Muslims to avoid something, it has to be taken seriously rather than lightly. For He (SWT) says, "Those who avoid *Taaghoot* and worshipping it and come repentant to Allah, there is a happy news for them [*labumul busbra*] (*Az-Zummr* 39:17). Furthermore, He (SWT) says, "If you avoid the great sins which have been prohibited to you, We will wipe out the blemishes and sins..." (*An-Nisaa* 4:31) Thus Allah (SWT) uses the expression 'avoid' prohibiting other serious evils like worshipping Satan [Taghoot] (*An-Nahl* 16:36) worshipping idols, which He calls *rijs* [*rijs min al awthaan*], false speech [*qawluz zoor*] (*Al-Hadj* 22:30), and conjecture [*dhanna*] (*Al-Hujraat* 49:12).

Then comes the sixth reason for not getting involved in drinking intoxicants, [*la'allakum tuflihoon*], in order that you may prosper. There is no prosperity or success in using intoxicants, and you would never see a drunkard prospering in the sense of this worldly or other worldly affairs. Prosperity or success [*falab*] is for the believers who follow the commandments, for example, those listed in *Al-Moeminoon* 23:1-12. *Falah* is for those who 'purified' themselves [*Qad aflab man tazakka*] (*Al-A'ala* 87:12, *Ash-Shams* 91:1), and those who are God-conscious, God-fearing as expressed in numerous *ayats* in Quran [*wattaqullah la'allakum tuflihoon*]. *Falah* is for those who say, 'We have heard and we obey' (*An-Noor* 24:51). *Falah* or prosperity is not for those who falsified and denied the signs of Allah (as expressed in *Al-An'aam* 6:21 and numerous other places).

This is followed by the seventh and the eighth

reasons, creation of enmity and hatred against one another. Satan seeks only to cast among you enmity and hatred by means of intoxicants [*khamr*] and gambling. If you know the designs of Satan against you, you would not succumb to his pressures on you. Forewarned is forearmed.

Then, we have the ninth and the tenth reasons: drinking turns people away from remembrance of Allah and from His worship. Those who forget to remember His name or forget to worship Him are deprived of the only sources of closeness to Allah – Zikir and Salah, remembrance and prayer. 'Whoever withdraws himself from remembering the Merciful, Ar-Rahman, 'We', says Allah (SWT), 'assign a Satan to be an intimate companion to him.' This we are told in Surah (*Az-Zukhruf* 43:36). Furthermore, Allah (SWT) says: 'Woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of Allah.' (*Az-Zummr* 39:22). If a person is drunk, he would not only be missing the prayers which Allah (SWT) says keep people from *Fahshae* (immorality and obscenity) and *Munkar* (disapproved actions), (*Al-Ankabut* 29:45), but he would also enter the communion of the hypocrites who find remembrance and prayer hard or heavy to perform (*Al-Baqarah* 2: 45, *An-Nisaa* 4:142, *At-Tawbah* 9:45)

Then comes the eleventh reason: "Then, will you stop!" Allah (SWT) says believe in Allah and His Messenger and follow Allah and His Messenger so here Allah (SWT) through His Messenger is telling Muslims, commanding them, what they should do if they are believers in Allah and followers of the prophet (ASW). It is not for Muslims to say, "No, we shall not stop."

If we are Muslims, we have to say, "We have heard and we obey" [*sami'ana wa ata'ana*]. The word [*hal*] in the expression [*fa hal antum munta-boon*] is interrogative in form, but imperative in meaning. It is used for emphasis that would not be available if only the imperative '*intahoo*' had been used. The expression, in essence, means 'stop' with added emphasis. When Allah (SWT) says, "Then will you be grateful!" [*fa hal antum shaakiroon*] (*Al-Anbiyaa* 421:80), what does He mean and what are we to do? Of course, He means, 'Be grateful' and all we have to do is express our gratitude to Him. This is an order, not a question. When Allah (SWT) says, 'Will you be Muslims' [*fa hal antum Muslimoon*] (*Hud* 11:14), He is not asking people whether or not they will be Muslims, but He (SWT) is commanding them to be Muslims – Muslims not only in name, but in essence and in spirit. As Muslims, we know the only response to these rhetorical questions is to be grateful, to be good Muslims (not only in name) and to stop drinking. Those who find it hard to stop drinking, will have to find for themselves a way other than that of Islam.

The **twelfth** reason has something to do with obedience of Allah (SWT). Those who insist on drinking, are not obeying Allah, as a matter of fact, they are very much in the business of disobeying Him. This takes them out of the realm of Islam. People cannot be looking forward to His Mercy and Forgiveness if they refuse to obey Allah (SWT).

Then comes the **thirteenth** reason, obey the Messenger (of Allah) by not drinking or by stopping drinking. If people still insist on drinking, they are not

obeying the Messenger of Allah, and as such, they have no relationship with the Messenger of Allah, either. People cannot be claiming to be followers of the Prophet of God (ASW) if they are not following him, and instead, are insisting on doing something that is not approved by Allah (SWT) or the Messenger (ASW).

The **fourteenth** reason requires us to beware of drinking to stay away from [*wa-hdharu*]. It is another imperative, as a matter of fact, third, so far. How many times, and in how many different ways, does God have to tell people to stop doing something before they will really stop doing it?

The **fifteenth** reason warns us against turning away (from the Lord's commandments), because He equates turning away from His commandments to rejection [*kufri*]. He (SWT) says, 'If you turn away, then know that Allah does not love rejecters, the *kafireen* [*fa in tawallo fa innallah laa yuhibul kafireen*] (*Aal-Imraan* 3:32)

The **sixteenth** reason is the warning from Our Lord that there is a particular duty for Our Messenger, and he is fulfilling it by conveying the message to you. He has come to show us the right path. Why is it that we should refuse to follow an order that is for our own good and in our own interest. He has done his part, the rest is really up to us.

The **seventeenth** reason is that it is only the plain conveyance (of the message) that is important for the Prophet (SAW). Whether people take heed or not is their own decision. There is no compulsion in religion

when the Truth has been brought to stand out against the falsehood [*Qad tabayyanur-rushd minal ghayye*]... (*Al-Baqarah* 2:256). If people are intelligent, they should be able to follow what is the best for them, if they are *safeeh*, foolish, they would not know what to follow and what to do. The Messenger of God has been sent this Book only to discriminate the light from the darkness. Muslims have already been instructed to eat pure things [*Tayyebaat*] which excludes all that is not *tayyeb*.

WHY WAS THE PROHIBITION GRADUAL, IN THREE STAGES?

Rasheedudin Al-Maibudawi (died 520 AH) raises an interesting question and then goes on to answer it. He says some one can point out that all other things, when they were declared *Haram* (prohibited), they were declared *Haram* by one commandment, but he can ask, why is it that it took three commandments to declare intoxicants *Haram*? What is the wisdom behind such gradual prohibition? Answering his own question, *Al-Maibudawi* says: Every prohibited thing, when it was declared *Haram*, had an alternative to take its place as *Halal*. When *sifab* (taking a woman illicitly) was declared *Haram*, *Nikah* (marrying a woman lawfully) was declared *Halal* in its place. When dead animals were declared *Haram*, slaughtered animals were declared *Halal* in their place; when *Riba* (usury) was declared *Haram*, *bai'a* (trade) was declared *Halal* in its place; when blood was declared *Haram*, meat was declared *Halal*. Because of the *Halal* things that took place of the things declared *Haram*, it did not come as a heavy burden on people to give up what they were being prohibited. Such things were therefore declared *Haram* in one go and the very

first commandment helped people keep away from what was declared *haram*. Drinking wine had been a cherished pastime of people, wine itself was an article that was beloved of their souls, and it was a cause of pleasure, happiness, and merry-making for them, and people had long been used to drinking, and they used to love it. The Lord of the universe, Allah (SWT) knew that prohibiting it without providing an alternative would be hard on people. Therefore due to His own benevolence, compassion, charity, and grace, in order to help believers endure their hardship, He (SWT) brought out the causes of prohibition gradually at three different stages before telling them to 'stop.' At first, He exposed its [*'uyub*] vices, flaws, or defects – pointing to its being a source of sin [*'ithm*], as He said, "Say, in it are sins (vices, evils), manifold [*Qul fee-hima 'ithmun kabeer..*]" Then because of it, He (SWT) restrained people from saying their prayers, a very significant deprivation, saying, "Don't get near to the prayer when you are drunk." Then, eventually, He (SWT) declared it *Haram*, in such a way that giving it up gradually, in stages was easy on them. Blessed be the Lord Who showed His love and compassion towards His servants. (*Kashaful Israr wa 'uddatul Abraar*, vol. 3, page 222-223).

What About the Food & Drink the People Had Before They Embraced Islam?

When the final prohibition was revealed, some of the companions went to the Messenger of Allah (AS) enquiring about what would happen to their Muslim relatives and friends who used to drink in the past and had already died. Obviously, such people had been believers and some of them had fought at Badar and

others had fought at Uhud and had died in war or of their own natural death. So the revelation came that said there is no blame on people who had had intoxicants before the commandment of prohibition had arrived.

There shall be no sin (imputed) to those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, there is no blame for what they ate (in the past), when they guarded themselves from evil (fearing God), and believed, and did deeds of righteousness – then again guarded themselves from evil and believed, and then, again, guarded themselves from evil and did good deeds, for Allah loves those who do good deeds.”

(*Al-Maedah* 5:93).

For those who had passed away, Allah's Messenger (ASW) said “If intoxicants had been declared *haram* when they were still alive, they would have given it up as you have given it up.”

KHAMR, THE MOTHER OF ALL EVILS:

Khamr, brewed from raw grapes, is haram (unlawful, prohibited), be it little or large in quantity, drinking in an Islamic state is likely to incur the punishment of *Hadd* (limitation), which would be eighty lashes.

Imam Shafa'ee (RA) says that this prohibition of intoxicants is not because of the liquor as such, but because of the reason and the meaning and that meaning

is this that the drink is an intoxicant, and that is the root of all the evils, and a source of all the violence. So the command applies to every thing that is intoxicant. And little of it is as *Haram* as the much of it.

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, “There is Khamr in grapes (*'anab*), and there is khamr in dates (*tamar*), and there is khamr in honey (*'asf*), and there is khamr in *burr* (wheat), and there is khamr in *sha'eer* (barley).” And he (SAW) said, every [*muskar*] intoxicant is khamr and every khamr is Haram.”

Among the many warnings narrated regarding intoxicants are the following:.

- It has been narrated by 'Uthman bin 'Affan (RA) who said, “the Messenger of Allah said, “Allah (SWT) does not bring together intoxicants and faith in one person's heart, never.”
- Abi Hurairah (RA) reports the Messenger of Allah saying, “A drinker of intoxicants is like a worshipper of idols.” This is because of the danger for his end (that is, he is likely to die without his faith intact.) Many a time has it happened that the drunkards have died without witnessing to the faith. They would ask the drunkard to say, *La illaha illallah*, he would say, “Drink and be merry.” They say that at the time of death, the state of mind on which he had lived most of his life becomes dominant over him. That is why the Prophet (SAW) has said, “A man dies on what he had lived on.”
- Also it is narrated from Abi Hurairah who says that

the Messenger of Allah said, "The fragrant wind of Jannah blows to the distances of 500 years of travel, but this wind will not blow on those who had been proud or haughty persons, demanders of obligation, and the drinkers of intoxicants."

- Ibn Abbas (RA) said, the Messenger of Allah said, "Avoid intoxicant as it is the key to all the evils..."
- 'Abdallah Ibn 'Umar reported that the Messenger of Allah (ASW) said, "Whoever drinks Khamar, Allah (SWT) does not accept his prayers for forty days, then if he repents (asking for forgiveness), Allah (SWT) forgives him. Then, if he returns (to drinking, again), Allah (SWT) does not accept his prayers for forty days... (This goes on for three times) Then if he returns (to drinking) the fourth time, then if he repents (or asks for forgiveness), Allah (SWT) does not accept his repentance... He said, whoever believed in Allah and in the day of Judgement, he will not sit in the company of eaters (in the same room, in the same party, or on the same table with people) who have intoxicant with them.

- Ayesha (RA), the Mother of Believers, the wife of the Prophet (SAW) has said, "If a drop of intoxicant falls into a well of water, and this well is covered up with soil later on, and there grows a blade of grass on it, the sheep eats it, (Ayesha RA says), I detest to eat the meat of that sheep.

- He (SAW) said by One Who raised me to be a prophet in the truth, the drinker of intoxicants will

be brought in such a situation that his face would have been darkened, his saliva flowing down to his feet, everyone who saw him would loathe him and shun him. If this person has anything of the Quran in his heart (remembers), the words and ayats of Quran shall grab him by his neck and bring him face to face with the Lord of the Judgement to judge him. The verses of the Quran will stand witness (against him) and plead with the Lord against the drunkard.

KHAMR • A RECIPE OF CURSE

Al-Maibudawi says this *Khamr* is a recipe of curse:

- the furious sound of it is Satan's clapping of his hands (as he is happy on having recruited a disciple),
- as he puts his dirty hand in it, it comes to boiling or warming up,
- then he puts his saliva in it so as to make it bitter for the drinker,
- then he puts his refuse in it so that it becomes thick and dense.

Rasheedudin Al-Maidudawi goes on to say, "This poor drunkard doesn't realize that he is drinking the refuse of Satan. Of course, there are people in this world who are known to have expressed satisfaction over consuming their own refuse considering it to be a healthy way of living.

- Again, this *Khamr* is a recipe of curse also in the sense that it takes a person out of senses.

- This *Khamr* is a poison for the Islamic way of life [deen]
 - As physical body does not live together with poison, so religion does not live together with drinking.
- Rasheedudin al-Maibudawi says:
- a. the drunkard suspends his right to justice,
 - b. he loses his guardianship over his children, (particularly his daughter),
 - c. he invokes the curse of Allah,
 - d. he destroys his end (at the end of his life,
 - e. and there is fear for him on the day of judgement,
 - f. and in this world.

a. Suspension of Justice is in the sense that, according to the majority of 'ulemaa', his witness is not acceptable;

b. some of the scholars think he has no guardianship over his daughter for obvious reasons,

c. and he is liable to the curse of Allah because, the Messenger of Allah (ASW) has said, "Indeed Allah curses

- the intoxicant,
- its squeezers (the brewers),
- and what it has been brewed in,
- and the one who offers it to somebody else to drink,
- one who carries it,
- and the container it had been contained in,

- the one who sells it,
- the one who buys it,
- and the one who eats from its earnings.

d. The fear of the end is in the sense that from traditions they have brought that five things are signs of the unfortunate, and at the time of death there is a fear of the loss of faith in them:

- neglecting prayers [*tarkus-salah*],
- eating of usury [*aklur-riba'*],
- insisting on adultery and fornication [*israaar* 'alaz-zina'],
- breaking relations with parents,
- and fidelity or loyalty on drinking of intoxicants.

e. Destruction of the other worldliness (on the day of judgement) is in the sense that tomorrow the drinker of *khamr*, will inevitably go to *Jahannum* and will have to drink the boiling water of the *Jahannum* – whether he had been repentant or not – as reported in a number of traditions of the Prophet of God.

f. And there is punishment of *Hadd* for him in this world if he has had a drink.

It's Not For You To Curse Drunkards!

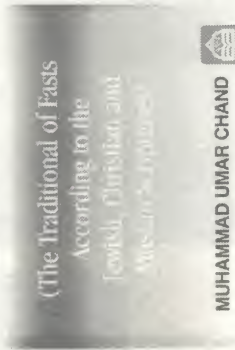
- Abu Hurairah (RA) has reported that they brought in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (SAW), some one who was drunk. The Messenger of Allah ordered him to be beaten. As the beating started,

someone was slapping him (with his hand), another one was hitting him with his shoes, still another was hitting him with a stick, and someone else was hitting him with the twisted cloth (which had been hardened because of the twists). In the end, some one said to him [*akhzaakallah*], that is, "Allah may disgrace you, confound you, or put you to shame." It was another way of saying something that means, Allah may curse you [*la'anatullah 'alaika*]. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "Don't say anything like that to him."

He (SAW) told the companions not to put him together with Satan. Instead, he asked them to say, "*Allabuma ghafirlahu, Allabuma-arhamu*" (Oh Allah, forgive him; Oh Allah, have mercy on him.)

Whoever undergoes the *hadd-e Shara'ee*, the punishment would be a Kaffarah, a recompense, an atonement, for him, and he will not be punished in the hereafter. That is why those who used to indulge in the temptation used to willingly accept the *Hadd* – so that they would be saved in the hereafter.

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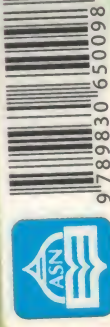
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Muhammad Umar Chand a renowned Islamic Scholar, Writer and Researcher is author of numerous books. His writings have appeared in various International magazines and books. He is also the author of "**Fasts As Ordained Before You**".

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